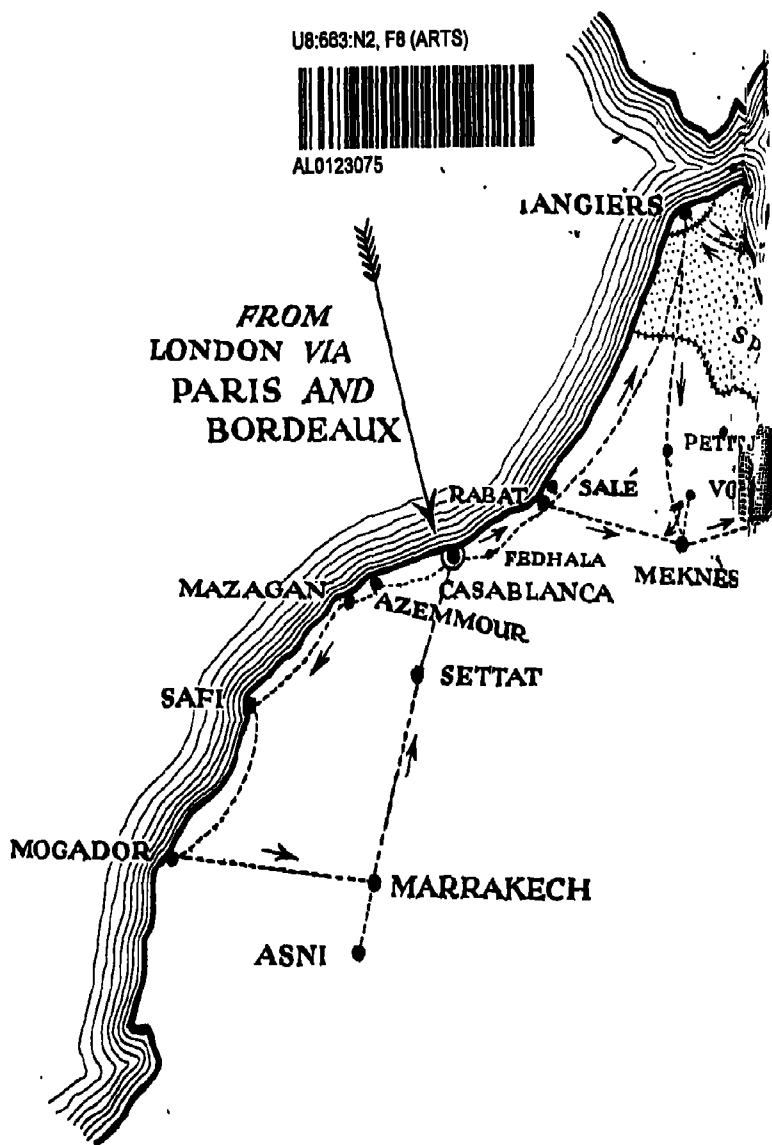


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A SOUK (MARKET)

THE MAGIC OF MOROCCO

BY
ELEANOR ELSNER

AUTHOR OF
"THE ROMANCE OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY AND THE
PYRENEES," "ROMANTIC FRANCE: THE ENCHANTED
LAND OF PROVENCE," ETC., ETC.

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To
ALL MY FRIENDS
IN MOROCCO;
AND ESPECIALLY THOSE
IN FEZ

"SALAAM ALAIKUM"

"I pray the prayer the Easterns do
May the peace of Allah abide with you;
Wherever you stay, wherever you go,
May the beautiful palms of Allah grow.
Through days of labour and nights of rest
May the love of Allah make you blest;
So I touch my heart—as the Easterns do—
May the peace of Allah abide with you."

Anonymous.

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PRINCIPAL WORKS USED OR CITED

<i>A Vision of Morocco</i>	V. C. Scott O'Connor (Thornton Butterworth)
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<i>Pratiques des Harems Marocains</i>	

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

	PAGE
The Call of Morocco—The Fascination of the Desert—Casablanca—End of Ancient Régime—The Act of Algeciras—Outbreak of Holy War—The Modern Town—Marrakesh Gate—The Story-Tellers	13

CHAPTER TWO

Mazagan—Across the Bled—Azzemour—Spinney's Garden	43
---	----

CHAPTER THREE

Safi—Moorish Architecture—Taking Tea in Native Fashion—Mogador—Dr. Bouveret's Hospital and Work—The "Southern District"—The Kotoubia—Marrakesh—The Jama-el-F'Na—The Snake-Charmer	57
---	----

CHAPTER FOUR

Marrakesh—The Jugglers—The Leather Workers and Dyers—The Silk Dyers—The Carpet Sellers—The Bahia—Its History—Ba Ahmed—The Aquedal—The Minara and the Mamounia	92
---	----

CHAPTER FIVE

Marrakesh—The Tombs of the Saadien Sultans—Asni.	122
--	-----

CHAPTER SIX

Meknes—The Forest of Mamora—The History of Moulay Mohammed—His Entry into Meknes—"Powder Play"—Moulay Ismail and his Work—The Aissaoua—Moulay Idriss—Volubilis—The Cedar Forests	134
--	-----

CHAPTER SEVEN

	PAGE
Rabat—The Museum—The Oudaiya Gardens—The Tour Hassan—Salé—Native Mat Making—Visit to a Harem .	
—Marriage Customs—Recipes, Potions and Charms .	167

CHAPTER EIGHT

Tangiers—Early History—Government by Statute—The Kasbah—The Grand Soukko—The Little Soukko—Educational Progress—La Montana—El Menebhi—Tetouan—Sultan of Spanish Morocco's Visit to Mosque—The Perfume Seller—More Charms and Potions. .	205
---	-----

CHAPTER NINE

Fez—Legend of Name—the Mellah—History of Fez—The Mosques—The Shrine of Moulai Idriss—The Medersas—The Students' Festival	249
--	-----

CHAPTER TEN

Fez—Visit to Court-house and Trial of Prisoners—The Tala—The Habous System of Local Government—Family Life in Fez—Superstitions and Customs—Moorish Music and Songs—Palace of Dar Batha—The Museum . . .	276
--	-----

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Fez—The Palais Jamai	306
--------------------------------	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A SOUK (MARKET)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
CASABLANCA	36
THE OLD HARBOUR AT MAZAGAN	50
A DESERT CARAVAN	70
A COUNTRY MARKET IN THE HAHHA PROVINCE	78
A SNAKE CHARMER	88
COURT OF THE MEDERSA, MARRAKESH	106
TOMBS OF THE SAADIEN SULTANS, MARRAKESH	124
BAB MENSOUR IN MEKNES	142
MOULAY IDRIS	162
THE GATE AND OLD WALLS OF CHELLA	180
A TOWN MARKET	212
CAMEL FONDOUK	236
INNER COURT AND DOOR OF THE BOU ANANIYA MEDERSA	268
NATIVE STREET IN FEZ	288
NATIVE STREET	312

THE MAGIC OF MOROCCO

CHAPTER ONE

The Call of Morocco—The Fascination of the Desert—Casablanca—
End of Ancient Régime—The Act of Algeciras—Outbreak of
Holy War—The Modern Town—Marrakesh Gate—The Story-
Tellers

WHEN I first talked of going to Morocco everyone said: "Ah, but you should have gone twenty years ago, when you took your life in your hands and it was a dangerous adventure!"

But I have found the most fascinating countries those which do not hold dangerous adventure as their chief attraction. Lands where the sun shines and the sky is blue, places where space and leisure prevail, where the quietness and dignity of the old life still counts for something, those are the countries which attract me.

And so I read and dreamed of Morocco through all the cold and cheerless months of a wet summer, and gradually that strange pull of a foreign land grew irresistibly in my heart.

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Many places have that mysterious power of drawing people to them which it seems impossible at last to resist, and which seems to affect the most different personalities. The call of the North is well known; it draws people back and back even when they have endured great hardships and privation there: they have no rest in their bones until they are preparing to return once again. The East has its lovers in the most secure clutch, and never really lets them go: Africa perhaps, has this strange power most of all, for it is impossible to describe exactly what the great pull of Africa is.

If certain countries have this subtle and insidious attraction for you and you are unable to visit them, it is better not to think of them at all, for if you do you will be *obliged* to go. If you give them the attention of your thoughts you will be drawn as firmly and surely as a magnet draws the needle; eventually you will give up everything, rearrange your life and go to them, for the pull of a country is almost the strongest in life.

And so, in a very short time I knew I was going to Morocco and that nothing whatever would stop me. "Trouble in the Riff country"—it meant nothing to me! after all the Riff is a small part of Morocco: "Blizzards and snowstorms in the Atlas Mountains"—I shall not be all the time in the Atlas: "Terrible inundations on the African coast"—well, I can always go into the interior!

Every apparent difficulty only made it more certain that I would go, and at last, with my insistent desire, all difficulties faded away.

Seated dreamily on a deck chair in the sun, voyaging from Bordeaux to Casablanca, I realised how hard Europe had tried to keep me. On the morning when we started snowdrifts blocked the drive, and the car could not be got out to take the luggage to the station. Arrived at last with difficulty in the train, the locomotive itself had to be dug out of a huge drift of snow near Seven-oaks—an unprecedented event in southern England—and my old friend, the Channel, whose guest I have been so many hundred times, rose up in his wrath to prevent my crossing. Ah, that little stretch of troubled water that lies between England and France: how calm and smiling it can look—how terribly angry and ominous it can develop in a short half-hour. All the seas and oceans of the world are my personal friends, but the little Channel always seems to try to impress me: “Yes, you know the Atlantic and the Pacific, and maybe even the terrible China Seas, but look what *I* can do!” seems to be his usual attitude when I entrust myself to his blue waves.

Perhaps I have never really given the Channel his proper and due attention; perhaps I have slightly neglected his real importance, though I must confess, not from any lack of demonstration on his part. However, this last time I will

confess he really impressed me. He is, I agree, a power to be reckoned with.

When I reached France, my dear foster-country, it lay under floods and floods of water. "Ah, the terrible water," was murmured in the train as we ran through field after field and mile after mile of flooded country.

At Bordeaux we were met with yet worse news. "*Beaucoup de mer—des grandes orages*"—"a wind of the most terrible!"

"You cannot possibly go," my French friends told us. "You must at least await the next boat. There will be another in ten days. The Bay is terrific in such storms."

But the Bay of Biscay is one of my *most* special friends, and is generally very kind to me. We understand each other, he and I, and I felt quite safe in trusting myself and my fellow voyager to him.

And most fully did he justify my trust. Hardly had we left Bordeaux in fog and mist, hardly had we got out of the river when the wind died, the sun blazed out, the warm and balmy air allowed us to spend our four days almost without intermission in our deck chairs, enjoying the sun of which I, at least, had seen all too little for the previous six months.

I love a journey which starts with a sea voyage! Even if it be only a few short days, one has time and leisure to adjust oneself to "start fair." No

letters, no telephones, and one need not really take any notice of the wireless news unless one likes! Alone on the sea with one's own undisturbed thoughts and a companion who respects one's desire for silence—there is no better beginning to a trip than that.

At odd times on the way from Bordeaux to Casablanca I talked of Morocco. Many of my fellow travellers knew it well. Some had even made it their home, loved it dearly, protested that they would never live anywhere else.

"It is quite remarkable," one of them said to me, "what the French have done for Morocco. They have made it an ideal land to travel and live in without spoiling it at all." I wondered, and asked him how this could be, but he would not explain: "You must find out for yourself," he told me with a smile, "you will see what I mean when you have been quite a short time in the country."

Though he would not discuss in detail what had really been done during the few years of the French occupation, he told me much about the country itself and its people. How they were, as yet, quite unspoilt by tourists. During the fifteen years since the country had really been opened not so many people had gone to Morocco: "It is quite, quite different from Tunisia and Algeria," he said; "indeed nothing could well be more different—it is good that you are confining your journey this time to Morocco."

It was always warm enough to sit out on deck after dinner, and at night after the stars came out and the thin crescent moon hung low in the sky, we induced him to talk to us of the desert, which he loved beyond everything, which meant more to him, he said, than anything else in the world.

He spoke of the wonderful nights in the desert when the stars seemed very, very near, and the moon rose, a huge glowing ball, hanging in a kind of suffused radiance, a light-giving, living orb entirely different from the "dead planet" we know. I remembered the impression the nearness of the stars and that strange visibility so evident at night on the great Spanish plains had made on me, but he insisted that it was something quite different in Africa.

Beautiful as the nights were, it was the early mornings which held for him all the wonders of the desert: "You cannot imagine what the morning is like there," he told us, "and I have a theory of my own about it. It is the romance of youth and freshness that is only found in wide and uncultivated lands, that makes the early morning so remarkable. There the earth has not been troubled by man, not turned up by the plough, artificially fertilised and made to labour, to bear crops, to yield her very life in harvests. She has still a freshness and virginity in her. • She is untamed, and morning coming to her quickens the

world, and gives exultant youth which makes one young again oneself. Once you have felt it," he went on, "you can never do without it again. It blows into your window with that early wind that comes just before the dawn, something wild and electric, the very thrill of youth itself, and you must get up and go out and saddle your horse and ride out—out into the morning! I am going back to it," he went on, "for it alone. I am giving up my own country and old friends, maybe even comfort and ease, but I cannot do without the gorgeous exultant morning life which keeps me young, which starts the day properly for me every morning I wake on the edge of the desert."

Long after he had gone to his cabin I sat on in my deck chair thinking of his words; how tired and weary one wakes in the great cities of Europe, how unrefreshed and reluctantly one comes back to another day! Even to a day which one knows will bring one pleasant company, happy meetings, some fortunate hours of life! It may well be that Mother Earth is in parts overburdened with her children and their heavy labour, that the lightness and sparkle of life cannot penetrate through the moisture and smoke of cities crammed with humanity. It takes the rays of the sun to burn through that. the delicate, elusive air of the morning vanishes before it.

And so we sailed down the coasts of Portugal and Spain, talking and reading and resting and

dreaming for four blissful and quiet days of blue skies and blue sea till one seemed soaked in that most delicious and restful colour and I, at least, would have been well content to go on and on, so lazy and satisfied had I become.

But on the fourth morning a strange vibration of life made itself felt on the ship. It permeated the decks, it invaded the cabins, one became aware of it immediately on waking. All those strange sounds of rattling chains, banging doors and hurrying feet which are inevitably connected with ships, came out of their usual harmony of ship noises and turned into hurrying and strident notes. The very ship's bell sounded a discord, and I wondered what had happened. "We are nearing some big city," my friend remarked, "intense human activity is jarring all the peaceful blue notes of the sea and sky."

And there, when I went on deck, was indeed a great city—Casablanca—gleaming all white and yellow in the sun! Casablanca, built in fifteen years and already overflowing with two hundred thousand inhabitants.

The French are so proud of Casablanca, and well indeed they may be, and yet—and yet, there is to me something almost terrifying about it. Twenty years ago Casablanca was not. A tiny Moslem town stood where it now stands: a town of no importance, without a bay, without even a river to break its low rocky coasts, the most un-

propitious site one might imagine that could have been chosen for the great seaport of Morocco.

That tiny Moslem town, little more than a village, lay on a flat and rocky coast without a beach, without the vestige of a harbour, and the Atlantic waves beat unmercifully on its front, while the west wind, a bad wind on that coast, shrieked and screamed through the streets. Why exactly this spot was selected no-one actually knew, but year by year it grew, millions of pounds have been spent on it, a hundred thousand emigrants came to it, it grew like the proverbial mushroom: "We pushed the sea out on that side and we pushed the natives out on the other, and here is the great city of Casablanca!" one of its great men told me, taking me over the city on the second day I was there.

As a stupendous human effort, a triumph of engineering and building over Nature's measures it stands supreme, and it is no wonder it is a beautiful modern town. But, all the same, it has something terrifying about it. One cannot forget that Nature objects to being set at nought and defied, and a strange menace broods over Casablanca in spite of its white palaces, its broad boulevards, its magnificent offices, theatres, factories, and its most remarkable harbour.

A new native town has been built for the original inhabitants it is true, but they do not really like having been pushed out at the back, even into a more commodious native town; and certainly

the sea does not like being pushed out in front, even for such a magnificent harbour as is now constructed at Casablanca.

While it was being built the Moroccans looked at it askance. The men of Tangiers, Mazagan, Safi, Mogador, even Agadir, all fine natural harbours on the same coast, watched the port of Casablanca being constructed with interest and even with awe. "It will never be finished," they said, "the Atlantic will destroy it—the ocean will claim its own again."

The first part of the prophecy seems likely to come true, for the harbour will probably never really be finished: the larger it grows the greater become the exports—those famous exports of phosphates—which multiply themselves by leaps and bounds each year, and more room is needed, more quays, more piers, more ship room. Not five years ago the great ocean liners had to anchor far outside, for the harbour would not hold enough water for them to enter. But to-day all that is changed: when I was there the huge French ship, *Île de France* came right up to the quay and disembarked her passengers direct.

Huge cranes are always at work laying the foundations of new piers, docks, and warehouses. What matter that the mark of the flood tide is registered high on the wall of the old Custom House, well on the townside of the harbour? The harbour itself extends far out beyond the shore

—"We have pushed the sea out on that side." What revenge will the sea take some day in the near or far future?

The story of the passing of the great Shereefian Empire has often been told, more or less fully and in detail, but never has it been made so clear to me as by my friend and fellow-passenger who talked to me on board the *Macoris*. To understand Morocco as it is now, one must know something of the nature of its people and of its history. Particularly one must realise that the final catastrophe, although it came with a sudden crash—a bolt from the blue, at the very time when everyone believed things were settling down—was really the natural result of innumerable small matters which stretched back for many years and which anything might have brought to a head. It was Europe who thought the Act of Algeciras had finally brought peace and quietness to Morocco. But the Moors knew better. That proud and haughty people were under no disillusion, they realised that at last their old régime was passing, that their freedom of twelve hundred years was drawing to its close. Like the fatalists they are, the most far-seeing of them tried to make the best of it, to control the hill tribes and to stem the waves of fanatical and religious storms which swept through the land with such disastrous results: but it proved impossible. The whole country was in

such a state that the tiniest flare-up was enough to set it all alight.

The story as it was told to me during long sunny hours on the deck of the *Macoris* was sufficiently thrilling and vital to hold me spellbound. Could I but tell it again as I heard it I would be happy indeed. But even if I could it is far too long to set down here, and I shall only relate what is necessary in order to make clear the present position of the country under the French Protectorate.

With the death of the Sultan, Moulai Hassan, the long internal peace which he had given his country by his wise and firm government, came to an end. True, it was carried on in a way for some time by his Grand Vizier, who attempted to follow his master's path as faithfully as he could. Moulai Hassan loved and understood his people thoroughly, he travelled all over the country, visiting and punishing the unruly tribes, meting out justice and charity and regulating his own life strictly by the faith and traditions of Islam. He was a fervent Mohammedan, had as little as possible to do with infidels, attempted no reforms for which he judged his country not yet ripe, and had no use whatever for any European customs. His Court was that of a true Sultan of Morocco, and his people looked on him as their father as well as their Sultan. But in one thing he failed. He omitted to educate and prepare a successor to carry on his policy. When he died his young

son, Prince Abdul Aziz, was, by his special wish, installed as Sultan. Abdul Aziz was everything his father was not; he was the son of Moulai Hassan's favourite Circassian slave, he had been brought up entirely in the Royal harem, completely under the influence of women, he was a weak character, and extremely vain.

As long as the Grand Vizier lived all went well, for Abdul Aziz was only too glad to have his country run for him, and he gave himself up to an indolent and luxurious life. He was immensely impressed with European customs and life generally, and he introduced these into his own palace in every possible way.

On the death of his father's old adviser, the Grand Vizier, the young Sultan took the reins of power into his own hands and entirely changed the style of government. He gave out that what he called the brutal force and absolute autocracy of his father's rule should cease. *He* was an enlightened monarch and his people should be ruled according to modern and civilised methods. He introduced European customs, innovations and reforms with alarming rapidity, while his fanatical nation looked on in horror and disgust. One by one the older advisers and Caid, seeing their remonstrance and advice laughed at and disregarded, retired from the Court, and the Sultan filled their places with younger men. These, in order to curry favour, themselves adopted many

of the European customs and habits which have always been so loathed by strict Mohammedans.

The description of the royal palace at this time filled not only Morocco but also all thinking people in Europe with horror. It was so inevitable what the end must be.

The Mohammedans saw the Supreme Calif, their Sultan, playing tennis and billiards, buying motor cars and gramophones, teddy bears and musical boxes and spending his time playing as a child with toys. They saw him associating exclusively with the hated infidels, whose habits and customs he appeared to prefer to his own.

The whole nation shuddered when it was reported that ladies of the Royal harem rode bicycles in the palace grounds, and when a badly hushed-up scandal with a European woman resulted in her husband being given large tracts of valuable land in Morocco as compensation for her visits to the Sultan's harem, muttered threats began to be heard everywhere, and it was obvious that the people were greatly dissatisfied with their young ruler.

But all these events, which mainly touched his private life, were as nothing to what followed. The Sultan attempted to introduce the reforms of the infidels into affairs of State. He offended every rigid Believer by his utter disregard of their most cherished traditions. He had no gift for government, and he only desired to live indolently

and in great leisure. Very soon the affairs of the country drifted into the hands of those new ministers who were left. Many of those first appointed had, like rats, left the sinking ship. Those who remained seemed to be the worst type of crafty, second-rate native, who cared not a snap for the country or the people, and were only intent on feathering their own nests.

Then began an orgy of wanton expenditure, corruption and open thieving which no country could possibly stand. After some time the young Sultan realised what had happened: but it was then too late. He *had* to get money, and he began by pledging the state jewels, by selling government lands all down the coast; then by applying to the foreign capitalists for loans, and finally by pledging the Customs of Morocco to France in return for a large loan. This last event almost cost him his throne. The whole country was blind with rage, and looked on their Sultan as a weak regenerate who, by his love for foreign life and customs, had dissipated his great inheritance and had put them in the power of the infidels. The tribesmen spat whenever his name was mentioned, he was held in open contempt for having betrayed his people, and his life was threatened again and again.

By the Sultan's agreement with France that country took sixty per cent. of the Customs as interest on the immense loan made to him. But

this interest was never paid. There were practically no Customs! No rates had been collected since the death of Moulai Hassan. There was no money in the royal coffers, not even enough to keep up the army and force the tribesmen to pay their lawful Taxes. Finally France was obliged to take over the whole Customs and appoint officials to administer them. This was considered the most deadly insult of all, and by this time the whole kingdom was practically out of hand. All the hill tribes were in revolt, what roads there were were infested with brigands, and no foreigner's life was safe. Though the inhabitants of Morocco did not know it, more than half the country was already mortgaged to France in return for loans, and England, in consideration for a perfectly free hand in Egypt, agreed to give France an equally free hand in Morocco, only reserving the right to safeguard the commercial interests of the many British men who were already settled there. France and England saw eye to eye on this subject, or as nearly as made no matter. Not so Germany, however, who saw her prospects of trade and peaceful penetration into that portion of Africa receding into the dim and far distant future. After innumerable discussions, meetings and exchanges of Notes between the European Powers, the Act of Algeciras was agreed upon, which was held to be a great diplomatic triumph for Germany. The Act purported to do four things:

1. To guarantee the future of Morocco as an Independent State.
2. To prevent any European power acquiring special commercial or territorial advantages to the detriment of the others.
3. To introduce financial and administrative reforms which would be of benefit to the country itself.
4. To protect European lives and property against sudden religious outbursts.

The Act was signed in Algeciras in 1903, and seemed to work excellently among the Powers, but it proved the last straw that broke the camel's back in Morocco! The most fanatical and furious risings took place all over the country. The Moors were beside themselves with their Sultan, whom they alleged had sold his country outright to the infidels, dissipated the great fortune of his ancestors and disgraced the holy faith of Islam by accepting loans made by foreign Powers.

They did not understand the exact position—probably none but the ministers themselves knew the real facts—that the revenues, and in truth the country itself was pledged for loans, and that the Powers could, and would, have compelled Abdul Aziz to sign the Treaty had he refused.

But he did not even protest! He signed the Treaty in Fez with apparent gracious acquiescence, and from that day on his people had no more

use for him. He was despised and loathed so much that he dared not venture abroad, and the country openly gave out that they were only awaiting a suitable opportunity to get rid of him.

Then Morocco went mad with revolt. A Holy War was preached against the infidels, and the most violent anti-foreign wave of hatred swept through the land. Sir Harry Maclean, the Sultan's English adviser, was openly captured by the brigand, Raisuli, and his tribe merely laughed at the Sultan's written orders to release him! That celebrated Frenchman, Dr. Mauchamp, was foully murdered in Marrakesh, and Engineer Charbonnier was done to death in Tangiers. The whole land became completely unsafe for foreigners.

The Act of Algeciras gave France, with the support of England, several special privileges of which they took full advantage, and which established her position as the most important power in Morocco. Her Algerian frontiers made this practically necessary, and it was agreed that she, with the help of Spain, should train and organise the whole police force of the country. She was willing to take upon herself the whole responsibility for the law and order of Morocco, and as none other of the Powers wished to undertake the cleansing of this Augean stable, it was decided that she should do so. Strangely enough it was partly as a result of this that the destruction of Casablanca took place, and this event was fraught

with such immense consequence that its importance cannot be overlooked.

I shall never forget the dramatic fashion in which this story was told to me by one who had lived through it himself, and so I make no excuse for telling it again here.

There had always been great friction between the Arabs of the mountains—those nomadic tribes who live in tents, and whose life is fighting and warfare—and their brothers who dwell in the towns and villages, the Moors of intelligence and education. Jealousy was the root of it, of course, for the tribesmen envied the Moors their comforts and their trade, while affecting to despise them as men unable to fight and protect themselves. Every now and then when a tribe wanted money, rifles or horses, its members would descend from the hills and attack the nearest town, thieving and looting, shooting the inhabitants and burning the houses. Under the strong arm of Moulai Hassan these tribes were punished and kept in order. After his death they did what they liked, becoming more and more aggressive, and after the Treaty of Algeiras, which infuriated them, they openly revolted. They went about the country stirring up strife everywhere, and saying it was the fault of the town-dwelling Moors and their trading with foreigners, who had brought infidels into the country, who had perverted His Majesty the Sultan and had lowered the prestige of Islam.

They were, of course, utterly unreasonable, as they themselves did much trade through the various ports, bringing down their vegetables and grain to exchange for tea, coffee, sugar and many other things. But they saw their chances of raiding the towns rapidly going under the efficient French protection, they saw themselves being forced to pay taxes to the French Custom officials, they were spoiling for a fight. Many times the tribes descended from the hills, surrounded a town and threatened that they would burn and loot unless the infidels were immediately thrust out.

This once happened at Rabat, where the head tribesmen presented themselves to the Caid himself, told him they had come to kill the infidels and drive out the French, and demanded his assistance or they would sack and burn the town.

This crafty old man was equal to the occasion, for he answered that he was as strict a Mohammedan as they were. "I am in agreement," he answered them, "I hate the infidels—by all means let us drive them out—but the Sultan owes the French a very large sum of money, nearly ninety million francs. You must pay this and then we can demand them to leave. I suppose you have this money with you? When you have paid them I will assist you by all means in my power." While the tribesmen retired to discuss this momentous question the crafty Caid shut the gates of the town

and shot down every armed man who attempted to enter.

The sacking of Casablanca occurred on similar lines, though had the native Governor been a man of the calibre of the Caid of Rabat it would probably never have happened. Casablanca and its great harbour works maddened the tribesmen more than any other foreign activity. They watched "the sea being pushed out" with increasing fury; after various skirmishing attacks and many threats, a deputation from the Chaouia tribes of the surrounding country forced their way into the Governor's presence and laid an ultimatum before him. This ultimatum demanded that all the harbour works should cease immediately, and that the French Custom officials should be instantly dismissed. The native Governor, Si Bou Ben Bouzid, was a kindly but weak man. He was terrified to death by the deputation, and told them to return in twenty-four hours for their answer. This incident occurred on July 28th, 1907, and, by the irony of fate, several of the most important men of the town were absent, old inhabitants and men of great experience who could have undoubtedly influenced the Governor to give the tribesmen their proper answer. Although he was strongly advised to close the town gates, put armed guards on the walls and shoot every tribesmen who entered the town, nothing was done, and by July 30th the

lower town was full of wild tribesman, openly preaching a holy war against the infidel and inciting the inhabitants to loot and burn the Jewish quarter.

Casablanca was then a town of about thirty thousand inhabitants, including the Jews and many British, French and other European merchants who had established themselves there. The Consuls became alarmed, and finally a special message was despatched to the French Chargé d'Affaires at Tangiers, warning him of coming trouble and asking that a warship might be sent at once to protect the Europeans.

But the Holy War had been preached and the whole town was in revolt. Actually while the Consuls were closeted with the Governor, trying to stiffen his will to a good resistance, the storm broke. A young workman was beaten to death by the Arabs, an engineer driver on a train on the harbour works was stoned, workmen were attacked everywhere, and soon the town was in utter confusion. The Consulates were held with the greatest difficulty, and by the time the French boat arrived open warfare was raging. The French cruiser was compelled to fire on the town, by this time entirely in the hands of the tribesmen.

It was a terrible thing to be obliged to do, but there was no other way to protect the Europeans. The flags of the Consuls marked out the small quarter where the Europeans were defending them-

selves, and, but for that portion, the entire town became a complete ruin, and the tribesmen of the Chaouia, who had occupied and looted it, set fire to the shelled houses. It became worse than a ruin: it became a shambles!

When one remembers that on July 30th the majority of the inhabitants were following their usual occupations, leading a peaceful and quiet life, and that on August 5th in the whole town there was scarcely one stone left upon another, the disaster which overwhelmed them in so short a time may be visualised.

No accounts of the town during these five terrible days can describe the true conditions: invading tribesmen, baulked in their designs on the Europeans, infuriated and drunk with bloodshed, turned upon the Jewish quarter and wrecked it. The dead bodies of horses and men blocked the streets; falling houses, burning furniture and dying men were inextricably mixed up and ridden down by Arab horsemen. The insensate lust of fighting went on over the smoking ruins and drowned the shrieks of the wounded.

"I saw it," my friend told me, "four days after the bombardment, and I shall never forget the horror till the day of my death. Half-clad women crept about seeking for their children, their husbands, their aged relatives. Many of them went raving mad. The wounded were untended, the stench was indescribable, the place was running in

blood. One could only wish for the earth to open and swallow it up."

It is on the ruins of this tragic place that the modern Casablanca has arisen. So well planned, such a model city, built on the newest American lines! Its white houses glitter in the sun, avenues of palms line the boulevards, the great Trans-Atlantic Hotel provides an excellent cuisine and every possible comfort. The railway station, the theatre, the hospital and the post office are amongst the most beautiful places I ever saw; and each morning the air mail carries letters from the aerodrome outside the city with great despatch to Europe. The enormous harbour grows larger and larger. Quietly and insistently the work goes on. New parks are laid out and new streets are planned. Everywhere the most modern type of motor car rushes by at a terrific speed: there is no speed limit in Casablanca for motor cars or anything else! Everyone is going, rushing, as fast as he possibly can. It all seemed a little strange and terrible to me, but I was laughed at when I said so. "Of course Casablanca has to be like this; all the commerce of Morocco comes through it, it is like the engine-room of a great ship, it is the motive power which makes everything move—perhaps one should never see the engine-room at all—but still it is a very beautiful town, is it not? . . . " And I agreed with a strange reluctance that it has the air of a beautiful town.



Next day we went to the native quarter, that place to which the old Moorish inhabitants have gone, out at the Marrakesh Gate beyond the old walls, and there East and West clash violently. Outside are motors, the hum of machinery, the shriek of the trains—West in full blast of prosperity; within, the mud-trodden earth of the narrow streets, the smell of camels, the crowded bazaars; clouds of dust, splashes of colour, the long intense stare of the Arab, donkeys and mules heavily laden, crowding you to the side, the veiled women, the muttering unknown tongue.

Humanity all jammed together and living vividly, intensely, far more vital somehow than the harassed business man in the modern city. Many of them one recognises. Jews, always unmistakable, always the same in every Eastern and Southern country. They sit here with greasy curls and greasier wraps, waiting for business, willing to buy or sell anything. Few Arabs ask you to buy from their open shops. Mostly they stare hard at you, appraising you—despising you, the Infidel!

In Casablanca they are more used to foreigners, and only the natives in from the hills with their veiled women stare in amazement at the foreign women walking with only a hired guide in the open bazaar.

Afterwards, when I had seen many other native towns and came back to Casablanca, the native quarter did not interest me much. It seemed,

after the others, to have an air of Europe about it. A great many young Frenchmen stroll about in between the Arab shops and stalls, selling tawdry modern ornaments, lace, pots and pans, second-rate jewellery. One does not see the workshops actually making the articles they sell; all the tooled leather, the brass work and embroideries are made elsewhere and brought to Casablanca ready for sale.

But there are some things that can never be modernised, that even the most up-to-date business city fails to stamp with its unmistakable imprint. Outside the Marrakesh Gate, in the open square, there is always the true East to be seen. A caravan, coming in from the desert in long and swaying lines, camels stretching their necks from side to side, their drivers running up beside them and guiding them to the special place where they are unloaded. One would think after so long a journey the camels would be only too glad to have their heavy loads removed, but not a bit of it. They stand sullen and disobedient and have almost to be beaten before they will kneel down. The long interminable line of a caravan winds itself into a sort of ball when it arrives at its destination. All lie down together for the unloading. The mules, in particular, seem to me really intelligent, and I am sure the mule is a much maligned animal. I watched so many caravans come in at the Marrakesh Gate and I always noticed how the camels

had to be pushed and shouted at to get them to obey, while the mules laid down at once, of their own accord, and apparently went to sleep till their drivers were ready to unload them. After the pack has been taken off, the mule rolls over a few times to stretch and ease his back and then waits quietly until his supper is brought, after which he goes to sleep again, intelligent beast that he is. I developed a great respect for mules before I left Morocco. They seemed to have almost more sense than any other animal. On the other hand the camel sunk deeper and deeper in my opinion the more I saw of him. On the long marches over the desert, stretched out in a line one behind the other, they go evenly and quietly; but under any other conditions they are always abominable, snapping, biting, fighting, kicking, and the evil look on their faces seems a very just expression of their tempers. The little donkeys I loved, and there were always a number of these coming in and going out at the Marrakesh Gate. Most of all, however, I was interested in the story-tellers. Those old men who told their ancient tales to still older men as well as to lads and children. Every evening about five o'clock we used to go to the Gate and see them sitting in circles with the story-tellers standing in the centre, everyone—old and young—listening with rapt attention, oblivious of all else. It is astonishing how still Arabs sit; even the children will sit for

hours quite still, almost without moving their hands. The story-teller has an ideal audience. Nothing distracts their attention, not even strangers behind them. Their eyes are fixed on his face, none of his gestures escape them, their ears are strained to hear his lowest words. He is telling them some story as ancient as the Bible, and many of these stories are handed down almost unchanged from one famous story-teller to another. There are special favourites among the stories, and sometimes a very fine talker makes one his own—that is, he tells it better than anyone else. He travels round from town to town, from village to village, and his fame precedes him. “Achmed Ali, the story-teller, is coming,” is the news that runs through the place, and everyone crowds in. Arabs from distant camps, tribesmen from the near hills, natives working on the land for miles around hear the news in that mysterious fashion in which gossip spreads in the East. By early evening the village is packed, and Achmed Ali tells his centuries-old story to an audience of hundreds.

Once in the far south our guide asked, rather apologetically, to be excused the next day at five o'clock. As we had fixed a very special excursion for that afternoon it was rather inconvenient and we asked him if he would not take another day. Then he explained to us that he could not as the most famous story-teller in the Atlas would pass through for one day and would tell stories at five

o'clock. He had never heard this man as he was so old and seldom travelled now, he told some of the best known stories, and our guide wished so much to hear him. He might never have a chance again.

Of course we let him go, and next day questioned him. "Was it as interesting as he had expected?" His whole face lit up and his eyes gleamed. "It was wonderful, wonderful, I shall never forget it," he told us in a low voice. "What was it about?" we asked him, and immediately his face fell. "It is impossible to tell you, you would not understand," was all he would say; "I would tell you if I could," he continued, seeing our disappointment, "I would *like* to tell it to you, but it is a story for Arabs, and no Christian could understand it." The more he spoke of it the more we saw how deeply it had impressed him. No wanton or improper story had this been, but just a simple one which could not be told to Unbelievers.

I was always sorry I could never understand a word of all the stories I sat so often and listened to, but to watch the faces of the audience was an experience in itself. One could almost follow the outline of the tale by the looks on their faces.

Many caravans came to Casablanca and many story-tellers came too. There are always two or three outside the Gate on an early evening and the evening was certainly the time I liked Casablanca best. The newness and brilliance of the

gleaming houses softens in the rosy glow of the sun setting. Dark shadows lie over the plains behind, the wind generally dies down at sunset and the gleam of the sea is less garish. The dusk draws a veil over the enormous harbour works; the groans of the machinery fade away in the dim light. The coast lights begin to twinkle out and the great gleaming pharos swings its circle of light showing the white fringe of waves down the coast and the low hills to the north of the town—yes, I am prepared to say Casablanca is a beautiful town during these few minutes which are all that count between sunset and night in Morocco.

Late at night when the streets are almost empty a few veiled figures flit through the town silently, like shadows; they creep along close to the walls of the houses, trying to avoid being seen. I watched them night after night and wondered what and who they were, but no-one could tell me. Later on I learned the truth that they were old natives who went in the depths of night to the tomb of the Saint in the centre of the cemetery, that cemetery which had been almost destroyed by shell fire after the tribesmen had taken refuge in the Marabout's tomb. Part of the tomb still stands—the old Moslem cemetery has not yet been built upon—and these old Moors slip there at night, for every night someone keeps watch while some followers of Islam wander about the old graves and pray—Allah knows for what.

CHAPTER TWO.

Mazagan—Across the Bled—Azzemour—Spinney's Garden.

IT is not far from Casablanca to Mazagan; you can do it easily in two hours in a good car. So we started in the afternoon about four o'clock, for I wanted to see the country in the early evening. From about that time the sunshine is delicious and pleasant in Morocco, not hot and glaring, making dark glasses a necessity, as it does during the day. One hour's ride out of Casablanca into the Bled—that great rolling plain, which at the end of the Moroccan summer is burnt brown and black, but which, after the rains, quickly clothes itself, first with young green grass, then with every imaginable field flower known. For a few short weeks it is delicious, a gaily-coloured carpet, thickly woven of the most fascinating colours. When first I saw it it was all yellow, bright orange and white. Wild marigolds grew so thick and so close that the patches of colour were unbroken. Some were pale primrose colour, some the deepest orange, and then came stretches of dwarf daisies, growing low to the ground and making a white patch. Soon the colour shaded off to a pale mauve, and a wonderful scent filled the air.

"Night-scented-stock," I cried, when first I saw it, and stopped the car and gathered handfuls and handfuls, just for the sake of that most marvellous perfume. It is really too bad to gather it, for it fades immediately, but no-one can resist its scent, especially when they have not seen it for years and suddenly come across fields of it. Then there is the tiny blue iris and spikes of asphodel, and innumerable little wild orchids, and a hundred other delicious, tiny blossoms to delay you if you will be delayed.

After the night-scented-stock I took myself well in hand and promised we would not stop again. Time was getting on and night comes quickly in Morocco. The stars were beginning to prick their slits in the blue when suddenly—the car stopped. "Something very wrong, something it will take some time to put right," said the French chauffeur, and ran us off the road on to the side-grass. It *did* take a considerable time to put right, and I was quite glad, for I enjoyed sitting there in the half dark and watching the strange things that passed. It was like living in very ancient times, for the figures might have all come out of the Bible. Grave patriarchal men, heavily cloaked, riding slowly along on mules, their servants beside them; toiling families—father, mother, children—all carrying the common goods, with tiny babies strapped on the women's backs. A train of camels came swinging by, then a man leading an ass with a heavily-veiled

figure of a woman on it. This last stood out with the moon-bright sky behind it, and it seemed to me I had seen that picture many times before. All over the Bled tiny lights began to twinkle out, and if one looked carefully one could distinguish the long, low Berber tents they came from. It was delicious, sitting there watching the whole plain become almost light as day, as the moon rose fully and everything got clear.

I adore driving at night, and that first evening on the Moroccan Bled was a revelation to me; it showed me the beauty of a new kind of scenery I had never seen before, and I was almost sorry when the car was ready to start. But go on we had to, and quickly, for we had wasted much time: about an hour after we started again my companion gave a cry of delight, and looking up I saw what seemed to be a vision. A silver city hung on the edges of a river bank—houses, bastions, minarets, domes, with turreted walls that dropped down sheer into the dark water—all pure glittering silver in the moonshine. "Can it be real?" I whispered. "Ask what place it is." "Ah, you see it at a happy moment, madam," the French driver explained. "It is the town of Azze-mour, set on the river Oum-er-R'bia, just where it enters the sea. Look, you can see the moonlight on the waves breaking on the shore farther back. Many travellers make this journey by night to see it like this. It is far more beautiful now than by day."

Soon we were crossing its bridge, rushing through its main street, silent and deserted in the night and more like a dream city than ever. "We must come back to-morrow or the next day and see if it is really there or if this is only a beautiful vision," was the thought that flashed through my mind, and later on I found that my companion had registered the same vow as we passed through the town.

Mazagan is less like Africa than even Casablanca, but I was prepared for that. I knew of Mazagan as one of the old Portuguese towns, dating from the fifteenth century when Portugal had dreams of a mighty empire and her flag flew, bearing the cross of Abiz, the royal arms and heraldry of Portugal, from many towers and battlements on this coast of Morocco. And how they built, those old Portuguese pioneers, as though they expected their cities would last for all time. Castles, fortresses, palaces, churches, and battlements, it was like entering some ancient feudal town, coming into Mazagan that night with the high tower of the old church of Our Lady of the Assumption with the other tower behind it, the old Watch Tower of the town, just as the huge church towers rise above the houses in Portugal itself. The Church tower on Mazagan almost banishes Islam when one sees it at night with the low and shadowy domes and minarets,

half buried amongst the high houses surrounding it. I think I was bewitched, for though the vision of Azzemour was clear in my mind that night, I forgot I was in Morocco and imagined myself in some old Spanish town, when I woke again and again, to hear the hours pealed out by the church clock.

But in the morning—there was no mistake then. You stepped out on to your balcony directly in front of the bluest of blue seas, the waves breaking almost at your feet, and in dazzling and brilliant sunshine Mazagan greets you, shining and gleaming, as though she were made of white glazed tiles. Could stone ever be as white as this, even in the African sun? But perhaps it is the sun itself, and now I know the African sun I am aware of a quality in it I have seen nowhere else. It intensifies all colour almost painfully, the greens and blues and yellows and whites in Africa are quite different colours from the same in Europe. Even the brightest colours of them are dead, after the living, vibrating colour of Africa: the houses in Mazagan quiver literally with whiteness, the sea, far out, is so blue that you realise you never saw true blue colour before.

There was no doubt in the morning that Mazagan is now a Mohammedan town. Arabs in heavy cloaks are everywhere, even driving the cabs and working on the quays. Walking round the battlements of the old Portuguese town one

finds them huddled up in corners, crouched behind the walls and wrapping themselves in their cloaks to shelter from the Atlantic wind blowing straight in from the sea. The old town is now full of Jews—it has become the Mellah, or Jewish quarter—and the streets are full of the dark, almond-eyed people. The men wear the small, black skull-cap, which is the Jewish head-dress, the women with coloured silk scarves on their heads, and everywhere there are swarms and swarms of children. Catholics, Jews and Arabs: what a strange conglomeration of races meet here in this old town. The synagogue and the Catholic Church stand cheek by jowl inside the walls. The mosque is just outside, a stone's throw away. Farther off, back towards the Bled, lies the native town, and right round the magnificent bay, stretching away in a three-mile sweep, lie little country houses and white villas, standing out like specks of light against the blue-grey of the cliffs. After the dead flatness of the coast at Casablanca, the long curving bay of Mazagan gives much cause for thought. The old harbour was ready to hand, made by the Portuguese centuries ago. The great circling bay was in itself a fine anchorage. Why was this fine natural bay not used instead of making a new one?—but to such questions there are no answers.

At least it has left a fine coastline, unspoilt by docks, quays or warehouses. There is room and

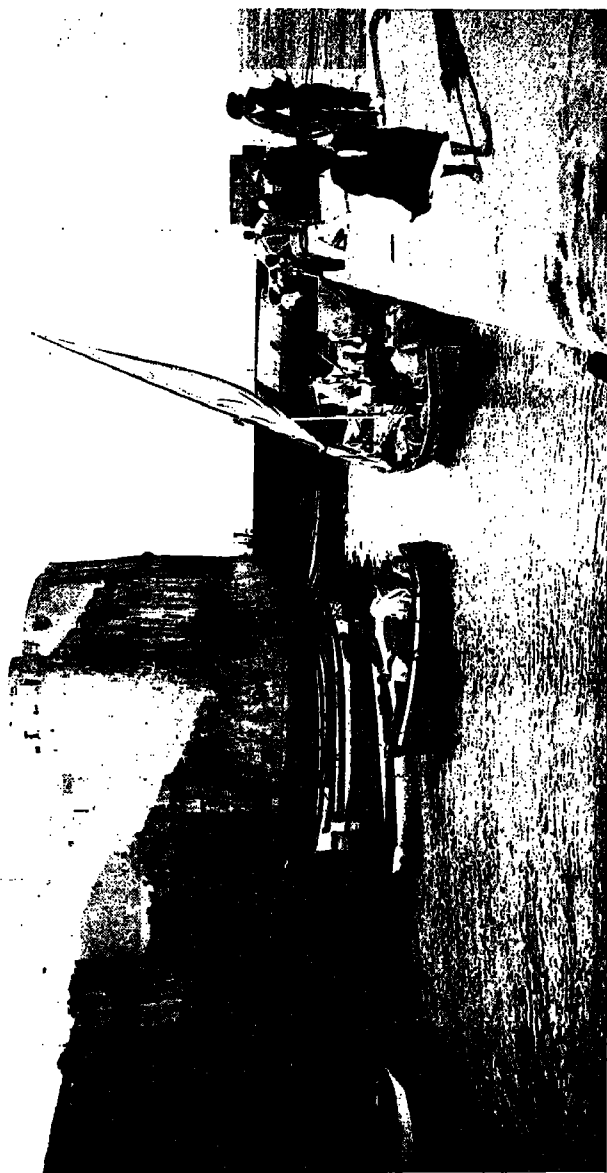
space for a fine broad boulevard and one may walk undisturbed for a mile or more along the sea front, the great Atlantic waves dashing in at one's feet.

The harbour lies against the walls of the old town; that harbour into which the Portuguese galleons sailed, centuries ago, with pictures of the Cross or of the Virgin bellying out on their painted sails, but into which now nothing comes but a few fishing boats, a few coasting steamers or the white sails of a passing yacht. Not far from the harbour lies the West Wall, part of the castle moat, which was flooded by the Atlantic each high tide. But the glory of the old city is really the ramparts.

One must climb these ramparts again and again, going from point to point and remembering how life was lived in such a place in those old and spacious days. One must go in the morning, at sunset, but best of all is to wander round the old fortifications by moonlight, when everything is pure silver cut against the black velvet of dark shadows and even the old stones come to life again. One can pass in at the great gate where the sentry stood day and night—no-one ever goes there now—and walk along to the Forges, where the officers' servants took their masters' horses to be shod. With a little imagination and vision one can still hear the ringing of the metal, the laughter of the men, the clump of the great hoofs on the stone!

Farther on one comes to the bell tower of the church, and across the silent square there rises the great watch tower, higher than the church tower, from which in olden days the Portuguese sentinels watched day and night for friends by sea and foes by land. Now the Muezzin cries his prayer five times a day from its turrets—"Allah, Allah, Allah, there is no god but Allah." How little did its builders guess to what use would be put their own watch-tower.

And then one goes on, past one great bastion after another. They have such lovely names, these turreted towers, and punctuate the fortifications at regular and irregular intervals. The Bastion of the Generals, the Bastion of the Storks, the Bastion of St. Anthony and St. Sebastian, the Bastion of the Angel, the Bastion of the Holy Spirit. I visited them again and again, never tiring of studying them and trying to find out their individual history. The Bastion of the Holy Spirit stood the fiercest attacks of the great siege four hundred years ago. The Bastion of the Angel is now a powder magazine, and as one gazes through the embrasures in its massive walls and looks out to sea, one wonders what in the world they want a powder magazine for on these ramparts to-day. Just below this Bastion is the old port into which all the galleons came in ancient days, but the great sea gate at the end of the port is now filled in and this little harbour is used no more. Some day



THE OLD HARBOUR AT MAZAGAN

the inflowing tide will silt it up with sand and pebbles, the lap—lapping of the water against the old walls will cease, and a garden will be made there as has been done lower down, where the moat of the castle filled with water at every tide, but where now a sheltered garden has been planted.

Never have I seen anything that told more clearly the story of fallen grandeur, of imperial pomp dead and gone, than these ancient fortifications and bastions of Mazagan. So solidly and so firmly were they built that they will stand immense, intact and as utterly useless as the old guns that lie broken and rusted beside their rotting wooden wheels. For nearly three hundred years the Portuguese were lords of Mazagan. They had to defend themselves from fanatical Islam which flung itself in hoards against the stout walls of the city in the effort to drive the infidel out of their country, and also from the enemy who came very stealthily by sea, creeping up in dead of night, trying to force entry into the old port by fair means or foul. No wonder they had to build such defences, such immensely strong walls. No wonder they turned the vaults of the castle into a cistern to hold their fresh water. They are like the vaults of some great cathedral. Every visitor to Mazagan still goes to see these vaulted cellars to-day, and everyone stands amazed at them. The captains and the kings have indeed departed, but these

ancient buildings will still remain for centuries, a relic of old, forgotten things.

On the other side of Mazagan, towards the sweeping bay, lies a thing of great beauty, which I enjoyed immensely and which everyone who visits Mazagan goes to see again and again. It is a garden—the garden of an Englishman, made with loving care years and years ago when it surrounded his house. This garden, or park, is now the property of the town of Mazagan, for the town council bought it from the man who made it and have enlarged and extended it; but all was kept to the general idea and plan of the owner, who laid it out with such careful thought. There are lawns and flower-beds, shady walks under avenues of tamarisk and palm trees, acacia and roses everywhere, huge hedges of arum lilies and still larger hedges of those brilliant red geraniums which grow into small trees in Morocco and flower more profusely than anywhere else I have ever seen. There are masses of pink geraniums, too, and these cover the wooden lattice behind the tennis courts, and there are magnolia trees, orange trees and camellia trees, from which one can pick basket after basket of blossoms and yet leave the trees fully covered. At every hour this garden is a sheer delight, and I spent much time there, sitting under the trees, listening to the bees among the acacia blossom and the roar of the sea behind the tamarisk hedges.

Such a place for dreaming, that lovely garden, a little corner of England in a foreign land! The scent of its flowers is not more delightful than the memory of the man who made it, one of those Englishmen who go out—pioneers—into far away countries and make the word of an Englishman *the* standard for honour and integrity throughout the whole land of their adoption.

Robert Spinney was one of the first English merchants in Morocco. It was he who built his house on the coast of Mazagan and made this memorable garden. During half a century he dealt with the Moors, becoming friendly with many great Caids and the head tribesmen. So high did they count his judgment and opinion that many of them made him their confidant, and asked his advice on their personal as well as their business affairs. The high honour in which he was held throughout Morocco is evinced in the fact that the most binding oath a Moor could give was called by general custom "Spinney's word." That signified a promise which could not be broken or gone back upon!

At the terrible time of the fall of Casablanca, when many Europeans came for refuge to the fortress at Mazagan, Mr. Spinney remained to the last in his office outside the walls of the old town, attending to his affairs and trying to do what he could to arrange the affairs of others. He knew well that no individual Moor would injure him,

and his belief in them was fully justified, for on the last day before he left the country the natives with whom he had done business for many years came in post-haste on their swiftest horses from all over, bringing money to pay him what they owed him. "Spinney's word" is still a binding oath to Moroccan traders and merchants, and no wonder "Spinney's garden" sends a little thrill of pride and delight through an English heart!

The day before we left Mazagan we motored back to see Azzemour, the little silver town set in a frame of black velvet. Even by day it is strange enough, all black and white, with its streets paved with flat stones from the river bed, many domed Marabout tombs, still more battlements and towers, and the ancient river walls standing, as of old, with their feet in the water.

The streets are very narrow, and the walls of the houses high and blank, but every now and then one catches glimpses of an inner court with its black and white paving stones and its coloured wall tiles. Here I saw for the first time those tiny children who hold the long threads for the tailors as they finish off the edges of burnous or kaftan. The little lads—for they are all boys who work—stand outside the open shop of their masters, who sit inside, cross-legged, on a straw mat, edging their work with the famous "border stitch." The boy holds in his hands two long looped threads of silk or wool and by swiftly interchanging the

threads from one hand to the other a plait is made which the tailor deftly transfixes by a stitch on to the edge of the material on which he is working. When I first saw these children I thought they were playing the old game of cat's cradle, looping the silk over their hands in much the same way. However, after having watched them some considerable time, I well understood it was no game but monotonous and arduous labour. These children begin to work when they are only four or five years old. The distance they stand from their master determines the size of the stitch pattern he makes: sometimes they stand quite close, only a few yards away, but sometimes they stand far outside the shop—even across the street—and then the "edge" assumes an entirely different pattern.

Another great feature of Azzemour was the numerous corn mills. In almost every one of the narrow streets were two or three mills, their wheels being turned by old horses or donkeys, who walk round and round in a circle for hours, with their eyes bandaged. They push the pole that turns the grinding stones, the master stands cracking his whip and only stopping when the amount of grain for each native had been ground. I was told that the tribes all round bring their grain to Azzemour, and one sees the men from the plains seated gravely on their sacks in the courtyard or against the walls of the houses, quietly awaiting their

turn. Verily there is no haste in Morocco! I was rather sorry at the last that we had gone to Azzemour, for there was nothing to be seen there that could not have been seen equally well at any other Moslem town, although later on in a house in Mogador I was shown some lovely plates of old Delft which had come from there, and there is the story that the natives of Azzemour had preserved the cargo of an old Dutch boat which had been wrecked on their shore in the olden days of the Barbary corsairs. More ancient still is the collection of Phœnician and Roman coins, which have been gathered from the walls and pavements of Azzemour, coins in use when Phœnician galleys sailed this coast and bartered their dyes and ivories for Moroccan grain. But there are none of these things to be found in the town itself to-day, and I wished I had never gone back but had kept my memory of it as the silver city, which rose before us in the moonlight that night we journeyed to Mazagan.

CHAPTER THREE

Safi—Moorish Architecture—Taking Tea in Native Fashion—
Mogador—Dr. Bouveret's Hospital and Work—the "Southern
District"—The Kotoubia—Marrakesh—The Jama-el-F'Na—
The Snake-Charmer.

FROM Mazagan to Safi is nothing of a journey and Safi is, perhaps, the most strangely picturesque of the old Portuguese ports of the African coast. But it is even more than that, for it was a famous port of call for Raleigh and Drake and other Elizabethan captains; the Virgin Queen took so great an interest in foreign trade and was anxious that her cavaliers should bring back to her treasure and curios from strange countries. She traded guns and munitions to the Moors and in return obtained from them leather and spices and amber and many other articles unknown in the England of those days. And the general port used by the English traders was Safi, built early in the fifteenth century by the Portuguese and built stoutly to last for all time, according to their cherished traditions. Its bastioned Keep, its castle, its immense walls and its wonderful chapel still stand. In the last one sees on the walls the royal arms of Portugal emblazoned

with the great Cross of Aviz, while heraldic shields from Lisbon, Oporto and other cities of the Mother Country, furnish other decorations. On the walls the old guns still lie as they do on the ramparts of Mazagan, heavily embossed with coats of arms and various decorations, some still resting in their wooden stands but many lying on the grass, pathetic objects which have outlived their uses.

At Safi the Atlantic comes in like a lion, roaring, and the sweep of the coast here is responsible for the forming of a current, the Houle, the condition of which all pilots are compelled to investigate before they bring their ships into the harbour. Daily reports are posted to tell each pilot at what hour it will be safe to cross the threatening wall of breakers which guard Safi as securely by sea as her fortifications do by land.

There is space now between the city walls and the ocean, and here is the usual native market, held twice a week, when caravans come in from the Bled with merchandise for the ships arriving in the harbour. Most of the gun-running done in Morocco entered, it is said, by Safi, and the Berbers could come down from the hills and obtain their arms and ammunition outside the city walls, getting away in those wild flights of horsemanship for which they were so famous, before any of the guardians of Safi could stop them.

But this town held for me more interest than all those old Portuguese buildings and traditions.

Here I was to meet the first of the great Moorish chieftains to whom I had special letters of introduction, who was to receive me in his own house and entertain me in Moorish fashion. How can I describe my utter disappointment when I found, on my arrival at the hotel, in Safi, his Mokhaznis (the master of his household) with many regrets and most profuse apologies. "His Lord had that very morning been called away on urgent business to Marrakesh—he was desolate, but placed his house and his servants at my disposal. His Lord begged that I would rest myself in his house, where refreshment was awaiting me, and that I would surely do him the honour of paying him a visit in Marrakesh when I arrived there." I thought at first of making some courteous reply and evading the invitation, but the Mokhaznis was so obviously alarmed and my interpreter told me his Lord would believe he had not made his apologies properly or would think that I did not believe him, and that it would be better if I would go. So of course I went, and how sorry I should have been later on had I not done so!

The Mokhaznis outdid himself to show us all his Lord's special treasures, to point out the beauty of his house, the rich colour of the tiles, the delicacy of the cedar-wood ceilings, the fountain, the garden and grounds. A Moorish house looks forbidding outside, with its blank, windowless walls, and even the entrance is a little strange, for it

is always dark, with curved entrance corridor and very narrow passages. But once arrived at the central court itself one imagines oneself in the stories of the One Thousand and One Nights.

Sidi El G——'s house in Safi was an old Moorish house, so old that the tiles still retained their deep and wonderful colour—the usual sign that they were made by the old workmen who had the secret of colour dyes—that secret dead and gone these last hundred years! One entered through heavy massive doors into the vaulted hall, rather dark, where many servants assembled to dismount their Lord's visitors, to hold or stable their horses and mules, while others are ready to conduct the guests through the intricate entrance corridors to the reception rooms. These winding and twisting passages are to be found in all Moorish houses, and are intended to be part of the defence, for if the enemy ever succeeded in entering the main door he could be stopped and trapped a dozen times before he found his way into the interior of the house itself. An arched door leads from the final corridor to the central court, and all Moorish houses are built round an open court. This court is paved with the famous tiles in the most intricate patterns and in lovely colours. On each side of the walls and the ground floor other tiles in various patterns make the mural decorations. In the centre of the court is usually a fountain or perhaps a pool of sunken marble, for the Moor must always have the

sound of running water in his ears. On each side of the court is a long room running its full length and entered by an arched doorway, generally of cedar-wood and most beautifully carved. The doors are put on the outside of these arches, but curtains hang from the inside, which are rolled up to give a view of the court and incidentally light and air in the room itself, as there are no windows. Often when the room is very large there will be three arches, though only the centre one is used as the entrance. The others are filled in with that carved woodwork, called Mesharabiya, so well-known in the East, with tiny lattice windows that open, although one can see through the carving without being seen behind it.

In the house I visited the curtains were down over the arches on three sides of the courtyard but rolled back from the fourth, and we were invited to enter and sit ourselves in the place of honour in the centre of a long, low divan, which runs the whole length of the room in Moorish houses. The floors were covered with the softest carpets, the divan strewn with the famous rugs of the "Sous," and innumerable cushions of all sizes and patterns were piled up at the back. The interpreter who accompanied us and the Mokhaznis slipped off their yellow babouch at the step in the arch as we entered, for no Moor enters a room with his shoes on, and as soon as we sat down cushions were placed behind our backs, under

our arms and even under our feet, till we were supported everywhere by little, big and medium-sized cushions in every possible shape and of the most vivid colouring. Two small divans were rolled up and the men settled themselves cross-legged on these. Immediately servants brought embroidered cloths and laid them on our knees and a silver basin and ewer with orange-flower water and fine towels were carried in by other attendants, of which one held the ewer before you, the other poured the perfumed water over your hands and the third wiped them carefully with a towel, patting them gently until all the moisture was gone.

Directly after this two brass trays on short legs were carried in and set down in front of the Mok-haznis, who did the honours of the house in the absence of his master. On one tray stood a silver tea caddy, huge lumps of sugar in a silver dish, a stove something like a Russian samovar, filled with boiling water, bunches of fresh wild mint and to my astonishment the most common and ordinary earthenware teapot I have ever seen.

On the other tray stood four very beautiful glasses covered with a cloth of embroidered gauze to keep them spotless. No words were spoken while it was being prepared for this is a function that savours almost of a ritual, one performed always by the master of the house himself, no matter how many servants he may have and in his absence by the head of his household. So

the Mokhaznis made tea in dead silence and we watched him. He took a handful of priceless green tea—that tea which has come direct by caravan from China and has never crossed the ocean, which is supposed to spoil its delicate bouquet—and put it into the teapot. He then put quite half a pound of sugar (in huge lumps) in as well, and added a bunch of fresh mint. He filled it up with boiling water and set it to stand for a minute.

With a sigh of relief he looked up and began to talk.

“Will you tell these ladies that His Excellency enormously regrets he has not had the honour of making for them the first mint tea they drink in his country,” he said to the interpreter.

“Will you convey to His Excellency . . . ” we began—but it is dull and tedious work, talking through an interpreter! One is never sure that what one says is being rendered correctly or even understood properly by the interpreter, as one is talking to him in a language not one’s own. He—a Moor—and I, an Englishwoman, had to talk in French in order for him to interpret into Arabic to the Mokhaznis! So the conversation was not what one might call animated, and we drank our mint tea, which was delicious, almost in silence after the first compliments had been exchanged. Etiquette requires that you drink three glasses of tea, but as the glasses are only small-sized tumblers and the tea most refreshing, no-one minded that.

After the three glasses were drunk, a huge silver tray of cakes was handed round; round rings of rather hard and very sweet pastry, little horns of hardbake filled with a sort of almond paste, tiny things like sponge fingers but much harder, round cakes with pink sugar on them—all sorts of unknown sweetmeats and candies. When we had eaten all we could manage the servants came again with the ewer and the orange-flower water and our hands were washed in the ancient way, by pouring the water over them, after which an attendant patted them with scented towels till they were dry. Another of the household attendants then brought a silver censer with burning sandalwood and orris root, and carefully scented our scarves and wraps, lifting up the corners of my cloak so that the scent should go underneath it, and ending by swinging the censer round the room so that all smell of food should disappear.

After a short conversation in Arabic with the interpreter the Mokhaznis asked us if we preferred to rest longer or if it would amuse us to see his lord's house, and of course we chose the latter. It was a delightful experience, wandering round that lovely house, being able to admire and ask questions at our leisure. It was one of the oldest houses in Safi and there were four storeys, with balconies of carved cedar-wood surrounding each floor, but opening on to the central court. The carving was dark with age, but in as fine and com-

plete condition, apparently, as on the day on which it was first cut. Each storey had its four long rooms running the length of the square court, its arched doorways, its long divans and cushions and there is absolutely nothing else in Moorish rooms. Even the low, round tables on which food is served are only brought in when needed and carried away by the servants directly the meal is over.

We were hurried rather quickly past the second floor, and from the ripples of laughter we gathered it was the women's quarters, and that they were watching us from behind the carved balconies. The Moorish women crouch down on cushions behind these carved railings on their own floor, and are thus able to see all that goes on in the courtyard while, apparently, being concealed themselves. Each balcony in this particular house had a kind of dropping cornice of carved wood so that even if you were on one of the other floors you could never see down into the balconies below. The women on the second floor were as securely concealed behind their carved railings as if they had been inside the room itself.

From the top floor we walked out on to the flat roof where a garden had been made, and where the women of the house come up after sunset to take the air and to see all the life of the world which their lord and master permits them. Poor children—for they are little more—one must not be too sorry for their ignorance and seclusion as

one is at first apt to be. They are, as yet, quite unfitted for any sort of life except one of being taken care of and guarded. They have no desire for liberty, they have not yet even learned to think.

The view from the flat roof of a Moorish house is always unique: one looks over a sea of flat roofs, many of them made into gardens, others with tiny towers in the corners, a view of the town which is always new and generally surprising. After the narrow streets and the high walls of the houses one comes into a different land, it seems. At evening time, when the women begin to come up and the children play, the thin reedy music of the *quemбри* (a little guitar with two strings) is always heard crying from some roof or another. It is indeed a new world into which one has entered.

The view from the house of Sidi El G—— in Safi was different, for it looked out on the ancient Portuguese fortifications and the ocean, but it was the first flat Moorish roof on which I had been, and it caught my imagination vividly. I could have stayed there dreaming for hours, and the Mokhaznis told us, through the interpreter, how his lord loved this house because of the wonderful view from its roof, better by far than his palaces in Fez and Marrakesh, and even more than his great castle in the Atlas Mountains. He told us that carpets and cushions were brought

up, awnings were swung, and that his lord spent all the evening here when he was in Safi. And I could well believe it. One saw far back across the Bled on the one hand, and on the other gazed far, far out to sea, while away to the south-east, high up in the sky, were those amazing points of the Atlas Mountains, gleaming like pink pearls in the reflection of the setting sun. They seem to have nothing to do with the earth at all, those strange fabulous Atlas Mountains, for a blue-grey mist cuts them off, lying between them and the land and separating them from this planet. I could not believe them to be anything but the line of clouds high up over the horizon, when they were first pointed out to me. It took me a long time to realise they were really mountain peaks.

We stayed on that roof till all the colours changed and all the surrounding country faded away into the blue magic of night. We lingered on, reluctant to go from so much beauty, and the Mokhaznis understood, wise old Moor that he was, and made us no more speeches and compliments. He gave us a sprig of jasmine and musk as we passed through the roof door—"My lord will appreciate your admiration of these terraces," he said. "He will be glad you had such a beautiful evening to see the sunset from his roof."

Mogador was the last town we saw on the Moroccan coast before going inland. and Mogador

is yet another town that holds English memories and traditions as well as Moorish. Francis Drake came here, at the commencement of his great voyage which took him all round the world, although his crew knew little of his intentions when he started. I always loved to read of the preparations for the great adventure, and how Queen Elizabeth sent her favourite captain "daintyes and perfumed waters" and how he himself carried fine furniture, many musicians, costly robes and jewels, and that all his plate and many of his cooking utensils were of silver—"whereby the civility and magnificence of his native country might be the more admired amongst the nations whithersoever he should come."

Drake, with his five ships, set sail from Plymouth towards the end of 1577. With him on this adventure went Bill Hawkins and his nephew John, and the great captain gave them "the island Mogadore" as a meeting place in case the ships should be separated by storms. According to Drake's log, they all arrived in good time—"Cape Cantine in Barbarie, December 15th, Christmas Day in the morning"—so the entry reads, and there they stayed, safely anchored between the mainland and the little island, for a week, before they sailed away across the Atlantic to search for treasure for the Virgin Queen and in her name "to discover and take possession of

all remote and barbarous lands unoccupied by Christian princes and people."

It is a long stretch since "Christmas Day in the morning 1577" when those famous ships—the *Golden Hind*, the *Little Christopher*, the *Marigold*, the *Elizabeth*, and the *Swan*—rested there on their outward voyage, but I think the coast is not much changed and the harbour stands much as it did then, the immense sea walls shutting in the city, the great sand dunes stretching away and away, the first outpost of the desert that I had seen. There, not so very far off, is Atlas; and beyond Atlas is the true desert.

Mogador is one of the newest Islamic cities, for the present town was built as late as 1760 on the ruins of the old Portuguese foundations. It was the Sultan Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah who built it; he wished to punish the people of the Sous, those rebel tribes of the Atlas, who had caused him and his house such endless trouble. So he decided to close their port of Agadir, which port since then has only been opened at the rarest intervals to European trade, and he erected the city of Mogador to take its place. He punished the rebel natives very effectually (though it is said they revenged themselves on him), for with the closing of Agadir the whole of the trade of the Sous district had to come through Mogador; a band of Jews from the Sous came up and settled in the new city and made it their head-quarters.

They have entirely replaced the Arab merchants who had been accustomed to handling all the commerce from the south, even from far off Timbuctoo, whence came dozens of camel caravans bringing ivory, ostrich feathers, and gold dust. For long enough now this trade has ceased, and the export to-day is mainly skins and leather from Marrakesh, almonds from the fertile province of the Haha, and those precious garments and essences from the Sous district. Nearly all the Arabic and sandarach gums used in Europe come from here, and those bitter gums of ammonia, which go to Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria and which are used as depilatories in all the countries of Islam, also came from here.

There is a strange legend in Mogador that the town was designed by a Scotsman, a favourite of the Sultan, named Macdougall, and that it is his name corrupted into the Arabic "Sidi Megdoul" and further changed to Mogador, that gave the town its present title. Anyhow the white domes of the tomb of Sidi Megdoul stand just outside the town among the sand hills, and he has become the patron saint of Mogador.

Scotsman or Moor, he built well, enclosing the town in stout walls with the two broad main streets stretching across it in the form of a huge cross, the only town in all Islam designed in such fashion. The Jews of Mogador furnish one-third of the entire population, and are the most impor-



A DESERT CARAVAN

tant section of that community in Morocco, and they are the direct link between the European markets and the people of the Sous, all the commerce of which goes through their hands.

It is enormously interesting to see the great Souk (market) just outside the walls of the town, where all the caravans from the hills and plains come in. By the laws of the town they are obliged to remain outside the walls till their goods have actually been purchased, and there is always a crowd of camels, camel drivers and wild-looking natives, unloading their goods, spreading the bales of skin out to dry in the sun, bargaining with the Jews, arranging for the shipment of bales—a strange market indeed to European eyes! Inside the town the two broad streets are filled with all sorts and conditions of men: natives from the Haha and Chiadma provinces, sailors from any ships which are lying in the harbour, people from the Sous, from the further Atlas tribes, from Marrakesh, even from the Sahara itself, gipsies, negroes, Europeans, and in and round about everywhere are the Jewish merchants and agents.

Mogador has a wonderful climate. Even in summer the heat is tempered by cool Atlantic breezes, and it is almost the only place in Morocco which is bearable during the hot summer months. It has excellent drains and a first-class water system, but when I was there a great catastrophe

had occurred, for owing to unprecedented floods the river Ksob had overflowed and broken its bridge which combined the duties of bridge and aqueduct, and furnished the water supply of the town. Repairs were immediately undertaken, but the continuous volume of water rushing down the river-bed made it a lengthy affair, and the water supply was sadly inadequate.

The Ksob empties itself into the sea just outside the town, which stands out at the end of a rocky peninsula, somewhat after the manner of Cadiz, of which Mogador reminded me greatly. All round Mogador stretched those shifting sand dunes, not true desert, but almost more terrifying, for these sands change and move in a most astonishing way. Each year, after certain months, new caravan tracks have to be made to ascertain which sand can be trusted to bear weight, and for this old camels are chosen, and small caravans set out, very lightly loaded, to make a new track for the year.

It is these shifting sands that buried the summer palace made by the Sultan, Mohammed Ben Abdallah, the sixth of the present dynasty of the Alaouite Sultans, when he built the town itself.

The site for this summer palace was chosen on the coast some way outside the town, and the decorations were said to be wonderfully beautiful, but alas! an evil fate has fallen upon it, for it is a complete ruin. The shifting sands have almost

buried it. We went out to see it on a day of warmth and sun, with scarcely the lightest breeze from the sea to cool the air, and it seemed incredible that evil winds could have raised such sandstorms as to ruin this extensive building. The natives believe the vindictive curses put by the people of the Sous on the Sultan when he closed their port of Agadir are the cause of the complete devastation of his summer palace. History seems almost to bear out this idea, for the site was specially chosen as being sheltered and free from all possibility of sand storms. Immediately after the erection of the palace the most violent storms began, and they continue at certain times of the year to the present day.

The palace lies almost smothered in sand, which rises in places up to the parapet itself. Inside, sand blocks every hall; one can climb in through some of the windows, and it was weird and uncanny to see the sand inside in movement; every now and then a little whirlwind of sand rose up, blew about and died down again, for no apparent reason. The Moorish guide who took us, refused to enter, and tried hard to prevent us doing so. "This place is accursed," he averred, "sand devils possess it; soon it will be buried completely."

Almost all the decorations were removed long ago, but some of the coloured tiles remain, and a few marble columns are still lying about. There are traces of terraces and courts with fountains,

and in one room is still to be traced a frieze with verses from the Koran, in that delicate carved stonework which the Moors executed in such inimitable fashion.

On our way back we turned to look at it; although there was no wind at all a quarter of a mile away, the palace itself seemed the centre of a great wind storm. The sand was blowing and swirling about it, lying up against it in heaps as though waves of sand had broken against it, rising higher and higher, and would presently cover it completely. "Soon it will disappear altogether," the Moor said, but he would not even turn to look at it from a distance! Certainly it seemed as though some evil spell lay over it—Africa is a strange land, and maybe there is more in the old Sous curse than we Northerners understand.

I liked Mogador itself immensely. It is an almost perfect mixture of sea and desert, of African inhabitants and civilised people. There was always a fresh sea wind playing about its walls and sailormen from all over the world in its streets. I loved going up to the ramparts at night and watching the moon rise over the hills, lighting up the battlements with silver and making moon-shadows of the great towers.

There is one little oasis in the centre of the town behind the main street, which pleased me immensely. It is a hospital, which began years ago with a single bed and which now has spread

to several Arab houses, all linked up and connected by courts and corridors which contain the different wards for the different races, who are brought back to health and vigour here.

The founder and fountain-head of all this energy is one of the most remarkable Frenchmen I have ever met. Dr. Bouveret, a man of as great personality as physical proportions, in twenty years has made the hospital in Mogador famous throughout the country.

From the one bed Dr. Bouveret's hospital has now over two hundred and fifty. No genuine case of distress is ever turned away, and there are wards for native men, for native women, for Jewish men and Jewish women, two operating theatres, a bacteriological section, an immense X-ray department. There is an extensive and delightful children's ward, where the little Moslem children have a teacher, and learn the Koran while they are being coaxed back to health and happiness. Such quiet, pathetic little folk, who sit round in a circle, or against the wall of their ward, chanting the Koran till they know it by heart. Down in the patio, full of orange trees and geraniums, one could hear the piping little voices. We passed through their balcony again and again on our way from one ward to another, and there they sat, quiet and immobile, as Moorish children sit, wrapped closely like their elders in their burnous, never moving, never ceasing their

chanting, and following us with their large, solemn eyes.

In this hospital there is a huge department of that celebrated French organisation, the Goutte de Lait (Drop of Milk), which provides milk, clothing and medical supervision for native children, and which must have already saved the lives of many thousands. The native mother brings her baby to the dépôt, where it is examined, weighed, and its proper amount of milk decided for it; each day this amount is set aside for it. The milk, together with any medicine, dressing or additional nourishment required, is delivered to the mother, all hygienically sealed and packed in a wire basket, which she takes away with her each day, bringing back the empty bottles, etc., in their wire cases the following morning, when a fresh supply is given to her. Every one of these wire baskets, all the bottles, dressings, etc., are sterilised and thoroughly disinfected daily, and it may be imagined what an amount of work is entailed thereby. Each year this hospital is enlarged and improved by its energetic founder and head. He now has the collaboration of skilled assistants, and while I was there a certificated woman doctor arrived to join his staff.

With the intense racial feelings between the Moslems and the Jews, even between the town Moors and the natives from the hills and plains, the greatest tact is needed to prevent friction, and

were Dr. Bouveret not the most wonderful of men it would have been impossible to organise such a hospital. As it is, the different races never meet, and even in his own consulting room different entrances and exits are provided to obviate what may seem to a European a ridiculous prejudice, but what, in Morocco, might lead to serious trouble. I saw a number of the splendid hospitals organised by the French during their short occupation of Morocco, but none impressed me as did this one of Dr. Bouveret's in Mogador.

Leaving Mogador one passes through a zone of sandhills which surround the town, but as these lie mostly towards the south one soon gets out of them and runs through a portion of that enormously fruitful and interesting "Southern district," which comprises several provinces, and which is believed will be the most prosperous part of the country. It has not only the richest soil, but it has great possibilities of irrigation from numerous streams running down from the mountains. A great deal has been done by the French since their occupation, in this regard, and an ingenious network of underground canals has already been begun, which are destined to distribute the water throughout the plains; when the whole system is complete and in working order this may indeed become the most fertile part of Africa.

This "Southern district" includes those fertile provinces of Haha, and the Chiadma, which produce maize, barley, almonds and beeswax: the Sous country, which is said to grow the finest olives and almonds in Africa, the Haous, which once exported sugar-cane and cotton and, when properly watered, will certainly do so again. Then come the famous districts of the Atlas tribes. The land of the M'Touga, which lies to the south-east of Mogador, exported formerly most of the almonds and nuts; next to this land comes the country of El Glaoui—the most powerful tribal Prince in the land, who carries the proud title of Pasha of Marrakesh beside many others, and who is one of the great personalities of Africa—it was in his house that I was entertained in Safi, and it is from his country that those celebrated Sous rugs come, which cover the divans of the richest nobles. Thé tribe of El Glaoui belong to the highest and most inaccessible part of the Atlas Mountains, strange and interesting people with a strange and interesting history. Next to this country lies that of the Goundafa, famous for its walnuts and olives. These three great Atlas tribes, the M'Touga, El Glaoui and the Goundafa, are among the most famous fighting men of Morocco, and have been hereditary enemies since the memory of man, but of their fighting adventures I shall have more to say later on. North-east of Marrakesh lies the Zemran country, which grows almost all the cereals



A COUNTRY MARKET IN THE HAHIA PROVINCE

of the whole of Morocco. It is said that this district yields twenty times more crops than it needs for itself. The fruit grown all over this "Southern district" is wonderful (except, of course, on the lands of the higher Atlas). Oranges, pears, cherries, plums, apricots, quince, dates, pomegranates—every variety of fruit eaten is grown in the district and is of the finest quality. Since the French occupation the natives are more willing to work, for they see what their soil can be made to yield, but the Moroccan native is incorrigibly lazy, and it is extremely difficult to induce even the best of them to undertake any regular work. Their idea is to work for a little money and then do nothing at all till it is gone, and it is this system which had so depleted much of this fertile land, for nothing was done after the harvest, no irrigation undertaken in an especially dry season, no provision made against a lean year during a fat one. The Moroccan native is a fatalist in even a greater degree than the average Mohammedan: "it is written" he will say, and see his tent collapse over him or his smallholding buried in sand, without making the faintest effort to deal with the situation.

But one only skirts the top of these smiling lands on the way from Mogador to Marrakesh, and soon again one is in different country. Gradually rising, one enters the stony and barren plateau with no vegetation and nothing on its wild moorland—it is beyond the irrigation system, and suffers

often from real famine. In the dreary little settlements where our car stopped, wild, gaunt natives crowded round us, the children covered with sores and all most miserably thin. They were begging for bread, for crumbs even, and were in desperate straits. For three years a terrible drought had devastated this wild and silent tableland and even the sheep and goats had had difficulty in finding enough to keep them alive. As a matter of fact we passed dozens of skeletons of dead sheep, mules and even the clean-picked bones of several camels, while motoring through this district. We were told that the distress here had been so great that hundreds of natives had crawled into both Mogador and Marrakesh, literally starving; they were to be seen scratching in the dust for any grains left by the fowls; many of them had not strength to get as far as the towns, and starved to death in their tents.

I was glad when we left this desolate place and came again into the fertile country which surrounds Marrakesh for miles. With one of those sudden contrasts that Africa so frequently presents, the land changes quite suddenly. We descended from the sterile tableland, straight into prosperity. The villages suddenly looked less dreary, some of the houses had corn-bins on their roofs, fruit trees in their surrounds, grass replaces the stones and dry baked-up earth, animals are grazing, the children look healthy and properly fed. There is a green

flush on the horizon—the celebrated palm oasis that surrounds Marrakesh itself—and then appears the point of a huge tower, reaching up into the sky itself—the Kotoubia—that famous tower which for generations has been the glad mark of the end of a long, toilsome journey.

One sees the Kotoubia for over thirty miles before one arrives at Marrakesh, and as the car brought us nearer and nearer my mind dwelt on the lovely things that had been said and written about this wonderful tower, for all the poets of Islam have rendered it homage.

“Thou tellest the weary traveller, while he is yet afar off, of thy city of a hundred fountains,” writes one.

“Oh, thou most lovely Minaret, the sight of thee rejoices mine eyes as does the green of a palm tree in a stony place,” sang another.

Most beautiful of all are the words of Ibn-El-Katib: “I have bathed myself in the calm ocean and it is impossible for me to describe, but when the Minaret rose before my eyes I cried out to my followers—‘Behold that which we seek, the end of our journey is accomplished.’”

The Mosque of the Kotoubia was begun by the first of the Almohad Sultans—Abdul Moumin ben Ali—but it was his grandson, the great Sultan Abu Yusef Yaquob, surnamed The Victorious, who built the tower. The first Sultan had a line of remarkable victories to his credit, not only in Morocco

itself but in Spain, where he was acknowledged lord of Seville, Granada and Toledo, but it was El Mansour who finally established the kingdom of the Moors in Spain by his great victory of Alarcos, where his armies took fifty thousand prisoners, leaving one hundred thousand dead upon the field and capturing booty greater than had ever before fallen to the lot of a Moorish sultan. He enriched his coffers and reflected credit on his country as no-one had ever done before, and to celebrate his victories he did two special things. One for the glory of God and one for the glory of himself. He added to his own style and magnificence the title of El Mansour—The Victorious—and to the glory of God he built three great towers—The Kotoubia at Marrakesh, the Tower of Hassan in Rabat, and the Giralda in Seville.

The building of Kotoubia itself savours of the miraculous—it stands two hundred and thirty feet high, and legend tells us that its foundations sink into the earth to the same depth. Its design is said to have been drawn by a Christian slave, and it was entirely built by the thousands of Spanish prisoners whom El Mansour forced to work on its construction; the colour of its pure turquoise tiles were said to rival the blue of the sky. The Sultan himself paid one hundred and twenty golden ducats from his private purse to gild the immense balls that decorate its dome and these were believed to be under the protection of four great planets.

Leo Africannus, that renowned traveller, protested that he could see the ocean eighty miles away from the gallery of its tower, and it was decreed that none but a blind Muezzin might raise his voice in the call of prayer from its summit; so great was its height he would be able to gaze into the royal harem in the palace of the Aguedal itself! Whoever prayed in the shade of the tower had his prayers answered, whoever slept under its shadow had his dreams fulfilled!

But all these glories have now left it, the planets must have withdrawn their protection, for the golden balls are gone, miraculously vanished, as have those from the Giralda in Seville. Its tiles have long since disappeared, cracked, broken, fallen from their setting, only a few remaining to testify of the beauty that once was theirs, and even those few left are no longer blue but, like old and worn turquoise, have faded to a dull greenish shade.

The Mosque itself has long since fallen into a sort of ruin, only its outer walls remain and now enclose a military encampment of the French garrison at Marrakesh. The Tower still stands and in the sunlight its massive blocks of stone take on a rosy glow which belongs to all the old walls and buildings of the city; instead of showing blue as the skies it turns red and brown as the desert. From afar off it still seems a wonderful thing: it is not till one comes close to it that the ruin which has overtaken it becomes apparent. It is only

then that one becomes aware of the cracks in between the boulders, the missing tiles, the crumbling turrets. The Kotoubia is one of those things one must not look at too closely; it should be seen from afar.

As one draws into Marrakesh, however, one's eyes leave the great tower and are held in a sort of enchantment by the city itself. One should approach it as we did, in the evening, when its red walls gleam and burn in the sunset, for a rosy haze actually seems to rise from the town about this time, like the glow from a smouldering fire. Before the walls stretches the belt of green—the celebrated oasis of palms and trees which surrounds the city—and behind it rises the great chain of glittering and snowy peaks—"where Day and Night meet, and Atlas upholds the heavens on his head and hands." The entrance into Marrakesh in the evening is a sight to make one silent, holding one's breath before so much beauty. And then, quite suddenly one is in the centre of African life, one's car runs through the Jama-el-F'Na, an immense square that lies almost in the centre of Marrakesh, between the modern buildings and the native city. This square has been well called the beating, pulsing heart of Africa; it seems always full of people, animals, things, except at night when it lies empty, like the shore from which the waves have withdrawn for a space. Just after sunset is one of its busiest times, everything is

moving, people are packing up, animals are being led away, tents are being struck, night is approaching, which brings man and beast alike to their rest. It was passing strange after the long quiet drive to rush into this turmoil, this welter of life, rushing out again along palm avenues to the Mamounia, that beautiful ill-fated palace which has now become an hotel. I could hardly wait for the morning to investigate the Jama-el-F'Na. After breakfast we went directly to it, taking our guide Achmed with us; the day had begun there long before, for if the native city goes to bed early it also rises early and the immense square had been crowded for hours. The medley is confusing and bewildering: I should imagine over two thousand people were gathered together there and the noise was indescribable. It is strange to remember that this turmoil of life has gone on here for many centuries, day after day the same, for the East does not change and will be the same as long as this city of the Sahara exists. It is not only the town market, this great open space before the native walls, it is the gathering place for all people of the land—the negro from tropical Africa, the Moors from the northern provinces, the men from the wild Atlas tribes, the natives with their caravans from the desert. Screens of tent canvas are rigged up to protect the stalls of fruit and vegetables from the sun. Groups of Arabs are squatted in circles, making mint tea; camels, mules and donkeys are

lying down resting and sleeping undisturbed by the uproar; jugglers, acrobats, musicians, beggars, snake-charmers, gipsies, the crowd is full of the strangest people.

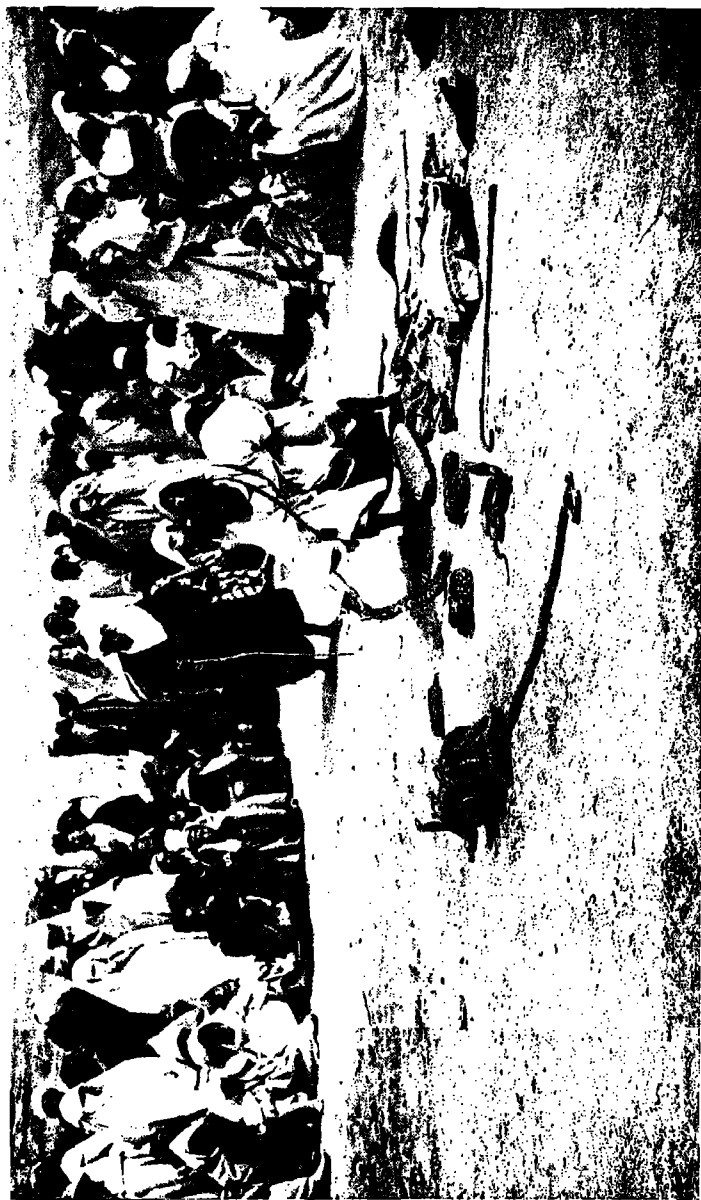
It seems to a foreigner as though there were no law or order, everyone settles down, sets up his stall, displays his wares or begins his dance, just wherever he likes—a crowd forms round him and space is secured for his special entertainment. We wandered about, looking at everything, but it was too bewildering at first to take in any special item. One was only conscious of a mass of shouting, singing, laughing humanity. Our guide, Achmed, piloted us between the groups, backwards and forwards, till I was almost giddy. The strange smell of Africa was in the air, a mixture of hot desert sand, masses of flowers, camels and innumerable animals and above all, hot humanity. Suddenly in a tiny space I almost fell over a man, lying flat in the dust, his eyes shut, his hands outstretched. He was crying out ceaselessly the name of his god—"Allah, Allah, the all-merciful, Allah, Allah!"—no-one took the smallest notice of him, bargaining, bartering and laughter went on around him. "Is he ill?" I asked. "He is a beggar who is also a holy man," Achmed replied. "He asks for nothing, but cries the name of God all day long"; as he spoke a bowl of milk was thrust into the outstretched hands, quickly drunk, and the cry went on again almost without inter-

mission—"Allah, Allah, the all-merciful, Allah, Allah!"

Almost next him was a small circle of people—four sullen-looking girls about fourteen or fifteen years of age, sitting in the centre of four natives, who were playing to them with drums and fifes. They were making the most hideous noise and seemed to be playing directly into the women's ears. "What are they?" we asked again. "They are disobedient wives, who refuse to do their husbands' will," Achmed replied. "They are sent here to listen to music that they may become better tempered!" Soon we were on the outside of a huge ring. "Here is a snake-charmer, I know him, he is good," said the guide, and he pushed the crowd aside and found places for us in the ring. Three men were there and a small boy, a brazier of charcoal and four tiny bags, which moved ominously on the hard earth. "Look, a large snake is round his neck," the Arab pointed out. "He will take the others out in turn."

Two of the men squatted on the ground, playing tumultuously and beating on their little African drums, and the boy sat with a dazed look in his eyes near the heaving bags. The man with the snake round his neck walked with dancing steps, round and round the circle, holding the snake's head in his hands, whispering to it, bringing it close to his face, its quivering tongue flicking him till his face was wet. Suddenly he went more

quickly, jumping and leaping into the air instead of dancing. He tore the snake from his neck and swung it round like a rope. It writhed, and its long body struck at him as a whip. It seemed but a moment later and he was sitting in the centre with his tongue stuck out and the snake hanging on to it. He tore it off and thrust it into one of the bags, opened two of the others and took out two more snakes which he put under the burnous of the lad, who closed his eyes and lay prone on the ground. "That is to warm them!" Achmed told us, "they are half dead with cold in the bags and will do nothing till they are warmed and brought to life." The boy lay still, almost as if dead, neither his eyelids flickered, nor did his hands move. The snake-charmer watched him intently and the throb of the drums went on more violently, more intensely, more monotonously. Suddenly the head of a snake appeared at the top of the boy's burnous, moving from side to side, touching his neck. Immediately the man snatched it away and wound it round his own neck, rushing round the circle, holding its head and talking to it as he had done to the first. It seemed sluggish and half asleep, and he spat at it to anger and arouse it. Each time he came round to the boy he paused and looked fixedly at him but it was not till the third time that the head of the second snake appeared, this time from the arm of the lad's cloak, crawling down outside his hand. Again it was snatched



A SNAKE CHARMER

away by the man, who slipped its body down into his open shirt and rushed round and round holding the two snakes with their heads together in front of his eyes. He had worked himself into a perfect frenzy, his long, black hair escaped from the red cloth and hung about his ears and neck, his eyes seemed starting from his head, his face was wet with sweat and saliva dropped from his open, red mouth. Suddenly he stood still in the centre of the circle for a second and closed his eyes, holding the snakes close to his face—in an instant they had struck and were hanging from his eyelids. He took his hands from them and left them hanging there, their bodies writhing and lashing at him. For full two minutes he stood motionless, the two snakes firmly fixed to the lids of his eyes. Then he grasped them just under their heads and tore them off, throwing them towards the boy, who put them quickly into their bags and tied the tops with string. "Is it finished?" we asked, for the boy had begun to go round the circle with a shell, collecting small coins, and the man stood motionless in the centre, breathing heavily. "No. I think not," Achmed replied. "He has another trick he sometimes does and I see a fourth bag, maybe he will do it to-day."

From an apparently wild and excited maniac the snake-charmer had become quite quiet and composed. He looked at Achmed with a questioning smile, the guide nodded his head and the music

which had stopped, recommenced, but to a different measure. It was not so noisy and turbulent, but a soft, thrumming sound, hypnotically slow, very insistent. The snake-charmer tossed the fourth bag to the boy, who placed it for a few moments near the charcoal brazier and then gave it to his master. The man opened it carefully and took out three much smaller snakes. They were very violently agitated and very much alive. The man gathered them up in one hand and began to walk with measured steps round the circle. He separated one from the other two and held it out at arm's length before him. He thrust his tongue out and let the snake bite it till the blood came, then he began to run round and round until the pace became so fast that one could hardly follow him. Finally with a great scream he put the snake's head in his mouth and bit it off, spitting it out and pausing for a moment near the brazier. The boy gave him a piece of live charcoal, held in a small pair of tongs. This he put into his mouth, apparently rolling it round as one would a bon-bon, and then spat that out. The music became noisier and noisier, the man more and more excited. He bit the second snake's head off, threw its body away, swallowed the head, cleansing his mouth afterwards with another piece of red-hot charcoal. "What will he do to the third snake," I asked in wonder. "This is a very strange trick," Achmed replied. "We never know what he does to the

third snake, but it disappears." By this time the man was rushing round so rapidly that one could scarcely follow his movements. The third snake writhed in his hand, curled its length round his wrist, tried hard to wriggle out of his grasp—the man threw it into the air and caught it again and again. He let it attach itself to his cheeks, to his throat, and finally threw it high in the air and caught it in his mouth and we watched the disappearance of that snake into his open gullet. He sank down on the ground immediately and the boy threw his burnous over him. The whole circle watched in breathless excitement. In less than two minutes the boy pulled the burnous off and the man was apparently asleep. There was no sign of the snake and he lay on his side breathing quite tranquilly. After the burnous was removed he got up, shook his clothes, held out his hands, demonstrated that no snake was there. The circle dispersed and Achmed shook his head as we walked away. "Even *I* do not know what he does with the third snake," he said thoughtfully. "I have asked him many times, but he will never tell me."

CHAPTER FOUR

Marrakesh—The Jugglers—The Leather Workers and Dyers—The Silk Dyers—The Carpet Sellers—The Bahia—Its History—Ba Ahmed—The Aquedal—The Minara and the Mamounia.

DAY after day we spent our mornings in the Jama-el-F'Na. There was always something new and curious to see, and I used to walk and walk there, never realising how tired I was until I got back to the hotel. The hard-trodden, uneven earth which one walks upon is very trying to the feet, but somehow the native life is so fascinating to watch, it is all so different from the Eastern bazaars that it was new to me, this life of the real South, and I never got tired of watching it. Amongst the hundreds of people there were, of course, innumerable children. They collected in little groups, sitting round a teacher and learning the first lesson of the Mohammedan boy—to chant the Koran by heart—and one came across these little groups dotted all over the place. One heard the thin, piping voices, and knew that somewhere, quite near, hidden by the crowd, the little circle was sitting—an open-air school in the dust! Then there were the acrobats and jugglers; the first doing various tricks that one

sees in every travelling circus in Europe, twisting themselves in and out the ladders and hoops, standing on each other's heads and shoulders till the top man reached to a great height, when he would throw himself off and land, like a cat, on his feet. The jugglers were much better than any I had before seen. Of course their tricks were a species of chicanery, but, all the same, they were very clever. One, in particular, whom we watched often, had a trick of his own. He managed, apparently without leaving the centre of the ring, to insert fruit, vegetables, a baby dormouse, a small rabbit, or a bunch of flowers, into the hoods and sleeves of the Moors' cloaks, even of those standing at the very back of the circle. He would show them an object, hold it in his hand and would then throw it into the air, catching it several times. At last, after throwing it to a great height, he would open his hands and show them, quite empty. Then he would point to a certain person and say "He has it," and the embarrassed man or boy would shake his head vehemently and protest. His neighbours would examine his cloak, and presently, to his utter astonishment and confusion, the object would be drawn out from the folds of his garment. This trick interested me in particular, for the juggler managed on one occasion to get a tight little bunch of rosebuds into the pocket of my own cloak. I was on the very outside of the circle watching him, and when he said I had it I was

quite certain that in this case, at any rate, he was wrong. I had felt no-one touch me and I denied emphatically that it was there. An argument rose between our interpreter and the juggler, the interpreter refusing to allow my cloak to be touched. Whereupon the juggler said to him that if he would feel in the lady's pocket he would find the posy. I immediately put my own hand into the pocket of my cloak and pulled the posy out. How it could possibly have got there I have not the faintest notion, but there it was, and a cleverer trick I have never seen.

The negro slaves of the great chieftains interested me very much. They were always passing through, elbowing their way among the dense crowd, going on errands to the native city, busy with the affairs of their master. They wear the usual native robes but have a huge silver ring in the left ear, which is the sign of the slave.

The water carriers were even more curious. These are half-naked natives, carrying their dripping goat-skins slung across their shoulders, holding the leg of the goat-skin to which is affixed a brass tube with a cork in it, in one hand; and the burnished brass cup in the other. They glide in and out among the people, uttering their strange guttural cry, and they do a roaring trade. The smallest coin in Morocco is paid for a cup of water, and the skins are very quickly emptied on a hot day. I loved to watch a group of water-carriers at a

fountain, filling their goat-skins, chattering and laughing and often splashing the water from the fountain over each other. The preparation of these skins for water carrying is very peculiar. They are the natural skins of the goats, from which the whole body is removed in some clever fashion, through the neck, and I was told that the skin, when all the flesh and bones had been taken out, was turned inside out and thoroughly cleansed. It is then turned back so that the hair is at the outside. The hoofs are cut off, three of the legs are tied up with goat gut and the fourth has a brass tube with a cork fitted securely into it. A strap from one fore and one hind leg slings it across the carrier's shoulders and he wears on his back a long cuirass of leather to protect his body from the wet skin.

When it is empty it hangs limp and shapeless, and its carrier takes it to the nearest fountain, undoes the neck aperture and refills it by tying it to one of the taps, of which there are always several in the wall fountains. It is a weird sight to see three or four of these empty skins being filled together, from limp looking bags of leather they assume almost the appearance of a living animal; as the water fills so the legs fill out, the skin heaves and moves almost as though the animal was breathing. When it is quite full its owner takes it from the tap, quickly ties up the neck securely and is off again with the wet, dripping

skin wobbling about his back. On a really hot day the water-carrier refills his goat-skin twice in an hour, so although he receives something rather less than half a farthing for each cup of water, he makes quite a decent living.

All over the square are stalls of fruit, piles and piles of golden oranges, pomegranates, lemons, apricots, grapefruit and olives in huge jars and baskets. These are protected by screens of tent canvas, rigged up to keep the sun off them. The native women, squatting on the ground and selling their flat loaves of bread, stick up a kind of fan-shaped canvas on a little pole, arranged so that the shadow of it falls across their head and shoulders, another primitive protection from the hot African sun. In one corner of the square, up against the high wall that shuts it in, is the strangest kind of rubbish market—old tin cans, bottles, pots and pans, old boxes, odd motor and cycle tyres. We could not think why our guide insisted on us going to this part, but we soon found out, for here are the apothecaries, sitting under their little red flags which are the signal of their trade. This is Africa with a vengeance, for the strange and terrible wares here laid out come from the days of witchcraft and sorcery. Nothing that ever found place in a civilised chemist's shop is to be seen here, but dried snake-skins, powdered liver and entrails, blood—in phials—from unborn creatures, herbs picked and dried under the aspects of different planets—love potions,

death potions, charms to bring the much-desired son to every Moorish woman, charms to keep her husband's love, various tokens to protect travellers, strange stones to keep plague and sickness away, little bags to hang round one's neck, containing quite innumerable horrors—"the more terrible the charm the more the native believes in it," we were told. "Dried fingers from dead men's hands, hairs from a child's head who has died of smallpox, and powdered human bones are amongst the most common ingredients of a cure." The Jama-el-F'Na must be a hot-bed of microbes and germs but at least it is in the fresh air, in an open space, and I suppose the hot African sun burns them up, for the smell there was not actually unpleasant.

It was a very different thing when we went into the native city itself, for the narrow streets were all roofed in with palm leaves laid across the trellis work to keep the sun off. This, naturally, also keeps the air out, and at first I wondered if I could stay there long, but one very soon becomes accustomed to it. It is difficult to define the peculiar smell—at first it reminds one of rancid butter and oil; butter, cheese and oil in great quantities are sold here, but in a Souk of its own: however, the odour of it seems to pervade the whole place. It was extremely fascinating to wander up and down the innumerable narrow Souks, so that I soon forgot the smell and the crowds and the hard-beaten earth which is so tiring to the feet. In the

babouche Souk one becomes bewildered with millions and millions of the leather slippers worn by the natives of Morocco. The men always wear yellow and the women red babouche and the ordinary ones are quite plain, heel-less and of leather of an astonishing softness, considering how thick it is. As well as these plain slippers there are many wonderfully worked in gold and silver, and others embroidered in colours. A different kind are made in tooled leather with intricate patterns and of strange, dull colours. The babies' babouche entranced me, made of the softest leather for the tiniest feet. The leather work generally and the leather itself are among the most beautiful things one sees here, and I stayed for hours watching the men working at it. The best hides are goat-skins, the second best sheep-skin, and their special dressing gives them a supple softness which has justly made Moroccan leather one of the most famous in the world.

They are dyed into the most remarkable colours—one afternoon we went out to one of the great dyeing vats by the gate of the old Moorish cemetery. We climbed on to the walls and sat there, watching the busy hive of native workmen. They were bringing in raw hides, dressing them, preparing them for the dyeing. These hides are first treated by a secret process, which is done in sheds, and which we were not allowed to see, but after this they are brought out, looking like dripping sacks

of chamois leather, sorted and put into the various dyeing vats. These are hollowed out of the stone pavement like bathing pools, and the men climb down into them and fasten the piles of skins to the sides. From the wall these pools look like enormous coloured flowers, and I have never seen anything like it. They contain dyes of pale primrose yellow, orange, flame-colour, the clearest bright yellow; in another corner of the great yard were all kinds of blue, from pale sky blue to very dark indigo, and in another corner some wonderful purples. In the centre were the reds—crimson, rose-colour, blood-red, brick-red, geranium, the palest pink. One whole side was set apart for the greens and it seemed to me that every shade of green lay there in the pools before our eyes—soft moss green, clear light green like new leaves, dark glassy green, green of the palm trees, grass green and many more than I can remember.

The remarkable thing about these vats was that they contained the exact colour which the skin took. So often in Europe I have seen, in dyeing factories, dark masses of fluid in a vat and been told, "This will dye red—this will dye blue. . . ." In the open air dyeing yards in Marrakesh the clear, pure colour itself was to be seen lying in the vat. One did not need to be told what colour any of these fluids would dye!

After the skins have been a certain time in the colouring they are passed through clear, running

water, a stream of which runs down one side of the dyeing yard, and then they are hung up or laid all round the walls to dry in the sun. When they are quite dry they are given to special workers of leather who submit them to a treatment which gives them the softness for which they are famous all the world over. After this they are sent direct to the leather merchants to be made up into bags, cushions, slippers, wallets, cases and all those fascinating leather things made in every Souk in Morocco.

In the little leather shops in the Souk in Marrakesh the owner sits on a cushion at the back surrounded, almost smothered, with his goods—unfilled cushions cover his walls and hang from his ceiling, bags, wallets, writing cases, lie all over the floor. The open shop is raised about three feet from the pavement, its owner climbs up into it by a little wooden ladder, and the buyer leans against the front, bargaining with him. If you are likely to become a customer he puts a cushion on the edge for you and there you sit, your feet dangling in the air. While you make your choice a glass of mint tea will be given to you and the merchant pulls from the walls anything he thinks will attract you, one advantage of this tiny shop being that the owner can reach everything in it without moving from his seat. These shops are like large square boxes or cupboards, let into the sides of the streets. The front closes up with a huge wooden flap or shutter, which lets down in

front when the shop is open. There are two ways of entering—by the tiny ladder of wood already described, or by a stout rope which hangs from the centre of the ceiling and which the owner of the shop catches in his hand and hoists himself up by. The younger men invariably use this method of entering their shops; it is only the older merchants who have these small wooden ladders. Once in the shop the merchant is surrounded by his wares; it is just as well he can reach them without moving, for there is not an inch of space in which he could move, however much he wished to. Sometimes if he has a slightly larger box there is a small child who either sits on a narrow ledge fastened on the corner of the shutter for him or just hangs on to the front. This unfortunate creature—who is rarely older than six years—runs to other shops, does errands for his master or carries cups of mint tea to his friends. These are the only Mohammedan children I ever saw who played, and every now and then you see two or three of them, escaped from their masters' supervision for the moment, chasing each other round the corners of the Souks, running in and out among the crowds of people, dodging under the legs of the camels and mules and actually staring, open-mouthed, at the foreign people.

The grocery and meal merchants all sit in boxes like these. They just stretch out a hand, take from a pile anything required, weigh it in the

scales they hold in their left hand, and deliver it to their customers. It seems a strange and easy way of keeping a shop! We must have wandered through miles and miles of these Souks. They seem endless, and although we stayed a long time in Marrakesh I certainly could never have found my way, for the native city here is very large. Of course there are various landmarks, but the difficulty is to find your way to them! The Souk of the brass sellers is one, for instance, where brass vases, kettles, cups, lamps, are all obtained out of sheets of metal, shaped and ornamented. This is near one of the great Gates into the native city, and when I found it, I always knew my way out but once lost in the maze of winding streets themselves the difficulty was to find the Brass Souk.

Perhaps one of the most interesting, and certainly one of the most picturesque parts of the whole native city is the Souk of the silk dyers. Silk is enormously used by all tailors to edge the burnous and cloaks, and to embroider the elaborate designs on the long robes, called kaftans, which are worn underneath them. So every tailor needs silk of the exact colour of the cloth he is working on, and it is all prepared and dyed in the Souk itself. The particular spot in the native town used for this purpose is a tiny square where four streets meet, and where a high wall-fountain with various basins stands. The four narrow streets leading down to this little square are all occupied

by silk merchants and silk dyers. One can see the huge balls of natural-coloured silk, twisted into an oval ball on a long stick, as it is originally wound off the cocoon itself. These balls hang all round the walls of the little box shops. As it is required this silk is carefully unwound from the sticks by means of a little wooden wheel which the merchant works with his toes, and which winds the silk on a long wooden stretcher into a kind of hank, just as one winds wool. When the hank has reached a certain weight, which the merchants seem to know by instinct, it is put on one side and another commenced, until twenty or thirty of them are ready to send to the dyers. The dyeing vats for silk stand at the ends of the streets, actually in the square itself; four men stand round each vat and dye two hanks at a time, each man holds one in and they dip it again and again into the dye, twisting it round in their hands, turning it from side to side, inside out, upside down so that every thread of the silk is eventually soaked with the dyeing fluid. This is done by the four men by completely rhythmic movements, and one can watch them until one becomes hypnotised, these movements are so even and regular. When a hank is finished they wring it out from the dye, rinse it in cold water at the fountain, wring it again, and hang it up on long lines which stretch right across the shop fronts and sometimes across the corners of the little square itself.

I shall never forget the first time we came to this part of the native city and saw the skeins of brilliant-coloured silk hanging in lines, drying in the sun! Rose-colour, and that deep magenta, which is the favourite colour of the native, and bright geranium red, were hanging on one side; purples, amethyst, mauve, violet, the colour of the darkest pansies, faced them on the other. It seemed to me I had never seen any of these colours in their richness before, and I could scarcely tear myself away.

We went many times to the Souk of the Carpet Sellers, and these shops are much larger, more like halls—huge rooms or even open courts—for it is impossible to show carpets in a small space. There was one famous carpet seller whose shop we went to many times, for he delighted in showing us his special treasures, and was never too tired to spread out rugs, carpets, embroideries and old robes for our inspection.

His warehouse consisted of two large open rooms with a court between. In this court two streams of water flowed between low stone walls; there were flower beds on either side and a raised stone terrace in the centre. There were acacia trees on a trellised pergola at one side, and the huge rooms at either end. Carpets covered the walls and the floors, they hung from the lintels of the doorposts, they even hung up against the outside walls of the court itself. We sat at the end

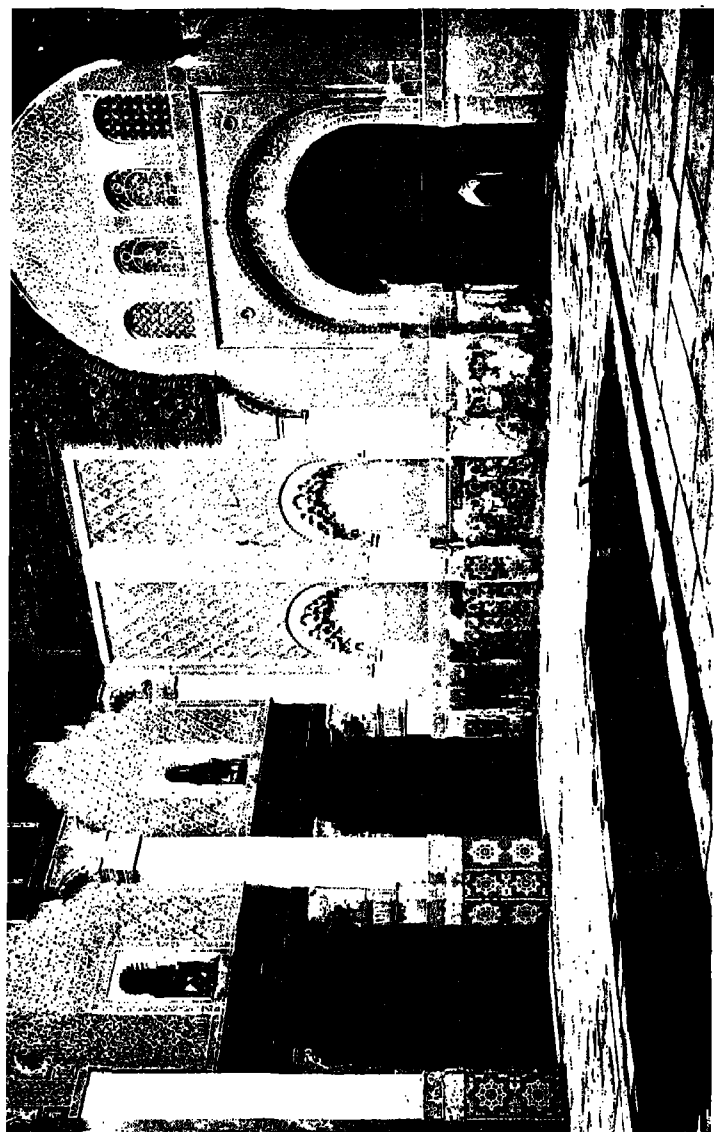
of the court on soft bales of rugs, while he told us about his various goods, told us how difficult it was now to get the famous black and white rugs from the Sous country, how seldom he could procure genuine old ones, that the characteristic and intricate patterns were not being made any more. These rugs come from the country of El Glaoui, and are always in black and white. The pattern is generally a stripe, and even when an elaborate pattern is worked it takes the form of long lines; sometimes these are in various colours, but the true Glaoui rug is in alternate stripes of black, white, a black pattern on a white ground alternating with stripes of plain black and white.

When dusk falls the native city begins to put itself to rest. The little donkeys and mules and horses, the evil-looking, ill-tempered camels are all led into their foudouks and tethered for the night. The Doukhala Gate especially is crowded with folk returning from the labours of the day, going back silently to their homes; all the tiny box shops shut up their flaps, twinkling lights are seen through the chinks of shutters, doors and gateways are barred, the quietness of evening falls upon the hubbub and noise of the day. Long before it is really night the Jama-el-F'Na is deserted, and only a few shadowy figures may be seen at intervals hurrying back to their homes. But the great square does not sleep as does the native city; it is waiting—waiting for

its closing scene, which takes place at midnight, when the Moquaddemnin—the watchmen of the city—perform their final act of guardianship for the day. Just before twelve o'clock they arrive on their horses from each quarter of the town. They form up in a line across the square, and, as the hour strikes, fire off a volley in the name of Allah, the All Merciful and of Mohammed his Prophet. There is a sharp firing of guns, a flash of light, and everyone knows the day is ended, rest and sleep is the portion allotted for all true Believers.

One of the most interesting places in Marrakesh is the Bahia, the palace which now belongs to the Resident-General of France in that town, but which was built by Sidi Ba Ahmed, Grand Vizier to two Sultans. The French Governor in Morocco has an official residence in all the important towns, and is not often in Marrakesh, so one may wander through the halls and the grounds of the Bahia at almost any time. The great doors are seldom opened, only for the official reception of the Governor, and usually one enters through one of those small and insignificant doors, cut into the high walls, which surround the palace, those massive walls which look as though a prison and not a palace were behind them.

I think one of the greatest charms of Moroccan towns is the sudden surprises which they con-



COURT OF THE MEDERSA, MARRAKESH

stantly present. One enters a narrow, dingy lane in one of the poorest sections of the city, its high windowless walls glare in the pitiless sun. The ground is the beaten earth, deep in dust, in which crouch half-starved beggars, beating their breasts and crying out for charity in the name of God. A little arch with an old wooden door is the only break in this wall; one knocks, a warder opens it, and one steps inside into a fairy story!

It was through such a door that we entered the Bahia: our eyes were tired with the burning sun, sore with dust, surfeited with colour, for we had just come from the Souk of the Silk Dyers. We passed through this little wooden door into a cool grey-green court with the spires of heavy cypresses waving against the blue sky, and the soft scent of innumerable flowers in the air. This first little court seemed full of that restful green light which the glossy leaves of magnolia and palm trees reflected on tile floors and marble columns. It was a place of rest and peace, and we were glad to sit there quietly for a while before going farther.

When the Governor is not in residence all the rooms are thrown open, and wandering through them one can realise the luxury of the life lived there in the olden days, for though some few things have been added, little has really been changed. All round the various courts long reception rooms open. The usual Moorish hall,

decorated with tiles, floored, as are the courts themselves, with marble. But of this one sees little, for the walls are covered with velvet Moorish hangings embroidered in gold and silver, with the Moorish arch, and the floors are hidden by priceless carpets and mats. The long divans against the walls display those softly-tinted rugs and large bolster-like cushions which are the solitary furniture of a Moroccan house. The few things which have been added do not destroy the illusion. The state beds in the apartment of the Governor and his wife are heavily draped with gorgeous brocades, cushions of sombre silks are arranged by them, they are not unlike the divans themselves—their carved wooden ends might well be screens of Mazabiehya. In the "Apartment of the Favourite," where nothing has been changed, are two wooden beds on either end of the long divan, they have carved heads and feet of wood, and are decorated with brocade mattresses and cushions. These beds are called "beds of parade," and were installed in the rooms of great nobles, the one concession to European custom ever made by a devout Mohammedan, but they were never used as beds—only as a kind of extension to, and end of, the ceremonial divan.

One passed from one hall to another, from one court to another. Almost in the centre of the palace is the great Court of the Ceremonies, paved in green and white, with a fountain in the centre

and many white pigeons drinking from its marble basin. This court is enormous, and was called the Court of Honour, and it was here that the Grand Vizier gave his audiences; it leads to another smaller court round which are the official workrooms of the Governor-General, with notices and maps on the walls and the huge writing table at which the business of the Protectorate is done. From the Governor's own room one looks into the most entrancing little garden—another court filled with trees, banana, acacia and orange. We sat in this court on the steps and watched the white petals falling into the marble basin of the fountain. The cooing of the doves and the murmuring of the water are all the sounds that reach one here, the flickering shadows on the tiled walks as the sun shines through the leaves is all that disturbs the eye. It is a place to dream and rest in, a place in which to sit for hours, where these will descend like the doves who drift down silently, sipping the water delicately from the fountain lip.

It is courts and gardens like these, I am quite sure, that have made the East into the land of storytellers. It is almost impossible to imagine oneself doing anything else here but listening to the strange, soft, Eastern love-songs or the old tales, all of which might be true in such a magical country. Here it was we heard the story of Sidi Ba Ahmed, told us by our own interpreter, whose

voice lapsed into that soft, sing-song tone in which most educated Moors speak French when they are telling a story.

Our interpreter, Achmed, always spoke to us in excellent French. He was an educated man who had studied at the University in Fez, and who knew the history and the poetry of his country by heart. He had even been in Europe, and was accounted as a young man of great learning, but when he told us a tale of his own people he became almost as a child, and always began in the same way. "*Un jour entre les jours*"—"One day among the days"—was the invariable commencement, and it always reminded me of the openings of our own fairy stories—"Once upon a time."

"One day among the days, Sidi Ba Ahmed built this house and I will tell you the story of his life, for it is one of the strangest in our history. He had negro blood in his veins, for his grandfather was one of the black slaves of the Sultan's guard. He was a true fighting negro, who knew no mercy and spared no-one. He adored and worshipped his master, but dealt with such brutality with everyone else that he was killed the first time he ventured alone outside the palace gates. His grandson never forgot this, and he protected himself from a like fate, for he never moved without an armed guard surrounding him, and he was wise in his generation. He was extraordinarily

like his grandfather in more ways than one. He had been brought up with the young Sultan, Moulai El Hassan, and was not only his slave and his favourite body-servant as a lad, but became his chief adviser, one might almost say his friend, identifying his friends with his master's, anticipating his wishes and carrying out his will even after his death. The great passion of his life was his devotion to his master, nothing else mattered to him. When the Sultan died quite suddenly at Tadla, Ba Ahmed determined that his last wishes should be carried out. He brought his corpse in state across the country, concealing the fact of the death, and entered into the residence at Rabat in great splendour, and was thus able to proclaim the accession of Moulai Hassan's favourite son as Sultan of Morocco, immediately after the announcement of his death. This young lad was the Sultan, Abdul Aziz, the weak monarch, who outraged the traditions of Islam and whom his country despised, so that even his name became a byword. 'Moulai Abdul Aziz,' said the holy Marabout Azzour, 'was mounted on a camel whose saddle had neither girth nor breast-strap——'

"If only Moulai Abdul Aziz had been content to continue the policy of his father's adviser after his death things might have been very different in Morocco, but that was not to be. The young Sultan was a lad of fourteen when his father died, and for some years Ba Ahmed ruled his young

master as strictly as he ruled the country. This strange man knew very well that the empire was tottering. For that he cared nothing, for being a negro the traditions of Islam meant nothing to him, but what he did care for was the intense desire of his master, the late Sultan, that Morocco should be saved. Ba Ahmed believed that the only way to do this was to hold the country in a strong and merciless grip, and he acted on this belief. His iron will kept the rebel hill-tribes in check, he ruthlessly put down anyone who did not see eye to eye with him, as was shown by his treatment of the brothers Jamaï, whose great position made them his most formidable rivals. He was that terrible thing—a strong and absolutely pitiless man, with the wildest blood in his veins and a passion to fulfil the will of his late master. The young Sultan soon saw that his only peace would be to give in to his Grand Vizier completely. After all it was the Grand Vizier who had put him on the throne and whose power kept him there, so he made a virtue of necessity and allowed Ba Ahmed his way. Ba Ahmed, it must be confessed, gave the young Sultan a run for his money, he might institute any reform, introduce any European innovation into his own palace and his harem that he liked, might choose his great friends from among the infidel, as long as he left Ba Ahmed with the reins of government in his hand, for unless he could bolster up the Moroccan empire his own

power must go and he stopped at nothing to achieve his ends. His negro blood cared not a whit for the traditions of Islam, and as he became stronger he outraged them again and again. There are terrible stories about him, and how he ill-treated and tortured the men who worked against him, violating even the traditions of sanctuary, which are held as the most sacred Mohammedan code of honour. His name was hated throughout the breadth and length of the land, but as long as he was alive he managed to keep the country together.

“He had inherited from his father one of the Arab houses where now stands the Bahia, and here he determined to build his palace—a palace which was to be so strong and so large that he could conceal himself within it, barricade it against his enemies, defend it, if necessary, as a fortress. The people who lived in the surrounding houses were peremptorily ordered to give them up and the palace grew, courts, reception rooms, gardens were added, decorated, pulled down and enlarged, until the Bahia as it stands now was fashioned by the will of the relentless man who designed it. It was not even finished when he died, and it is said that almost his last words were an order to his manager that the work was to be done accurately, exactly as it had been planned. He died in one of the little rooms overlooking the Court of the Ceremonies, and scarcely was the breath out of

his body than the young Sultan's private servants came and seized his goods, turning his wives and dependents out into poverty and wretchedness, claiming all his goods as the property of their master. The iron hand was loosened, the strict will withdrawn, and the bonds which held Morocco together burst and snapped."

Marrakesh lies in the centre of a great oasis, a fertile land, and it is natural that all round the walls stretch vast gardens and palaces. One may go out for miles in any direction and drive under groves of orange trees, avenues of palms and olive trees with young green corn growing at their feet. There are acres of roses, great silent pools, vast spaces enclosed in crumbling walls. There are arched pavilions where bygone Sultans took their pleasure, desolated courts which were once alive with the patter of bare feet, dancing, and the jangling of the gold and silver rings round slender ankles.

The Aquedal seemed to me the most beautiful of them all. Its long groves of trees are so arranged that the enclosing walls are not seen until one is actually beneath them. One passes through a gateway and enters a forest of orange trees, lit with golden lanterns and heavy with the scent of blossom. Wandering about under the trees, apparently untended except for the shapeless bundle of rags, are tiny cattle, those miniature black and

brown velvet herds of the South. They gaze at you with their placid eyes as you pass. As the wheels of the carriage crunch on the gravel clouds of fluttering white wings arise, not doves these, but something even whiter, the Fausse Egrets, or the small Ibis, than which I know no more beautiful bird. It flies with its head thrown back and showing a grace of its own.

Driving along under the deep arches of the trees the sun shines through the leaves in a green haze, giving an impression of translucent water, from which one comes to the surface only when one arrives at the edge of the lake itself—a placid stretch of water that reflects the rosy summer palace of Moulai Hassan, crumbling into decay and given over to flowers and birds.

Few people come here now, and we climbed the broken stairs in a dream, ascending to the flat roof where tiny flowers pushed up between the stones, making a carpet of many colours, the design of which was too intricate for even Arab craftsmen to copy.

Although the roof of this summer palace of the Aquedal is not very high, it is a bewildering vista that rolls away before one's eyes! A great sea of orange trees and olive groves washes its very walls and stretches away into the far distance till it is lost in the purple mist that lies about the feet of Atlas, veiling their grandeur lest mortals should be afraid. Above this mist glittering peaks rise

like spears into the sky "striking the Sultan's turret with a shaft of light" as the Eastern poet says, and holding one's eyes in an ecstasy of enchantment.

You gaze across miles of restful green to the cold heights of inaccessible snow, so incredible in this land of blazing sun. Truth and legend have here joined hands, creating a picture which holds them both, so unusual that the mind comes but slowly to the full realisation of what is before it.

It is difficult to leave these terraced roofs, and each time it becomes more difficult still to drag oneself forcibly back to earth from the contemplation of eternity. Yet one has only to go a few short yards for a very human emotion to pull at the heart strings. At the bottom of the steps in one of the lordly boathouses—now but a dilapidated shed, stands the royal barge, its gold tarnished and its colours faded, its rotting prow decorated with pathetic streamers of rag. The very door of the boathouse is covered with these strange tokens which are the embodied supplications of those women to whom Allah has denied the gift of a son. Here they come, those pathetic ones, and besiege with frantic prayers the old barge, kissing the wood with fervour and nailing their rag to the place they have kissed, in the hope that the magic power of the royal vessel will give them their heart's desire.

Yet another garden, the Minara, lies to the west of Marrakesh, but this is a far more formal place. Its groves are mainly of olive trees, and it has none of the magic of the Aquedal, but it, too, has its pool of water in the centre and a small pavilion, from the terrace of which one looks across to the city almost invisible behind its walls. Only the towers of the minarets rise above its flat roofs. On the other side of the pavilion there is a small private garden, scented with lemons and roses, and from whose gate a cascade of jasmine falls upon the intruder.

Outside the northern walls of the city lies the Palmerie, the remains of that great natural oasis where Marrakesh now stands. Here one can drive up and down the natural palm groves, watching the natives watering their flocks and herds at the numerous streams, transporting oneself, if one will, into the very pages of the Old Testament.

Yet one more celebrated garden at Marrakesh is that of the Mamounia, which was a garden long before the palace was built there. The Sultan, Mohammed-Ben-Abdallah, made it for his favourite son, Mamoun, and laid it out with that careful selection as to site and design which seems the gift of all Eastern gardeners. It lies at the extreme edge of the city, its palace is now indeed the last house of residence within the walls, for the walls of the city themselves divide it from the plain beyond, and if one climbs these crumbling old

ramparts one has a long vista across the plain towards the north-west. Here the natives are exercising their horses, here little trains of heavily-laden donkeys come in with stone from the Atlas. Clouds of dust proclaim the advancing caravans, and as they draw nearer one sees the swinging gait of the camels, their strange long shadows moving across the baked earth. The first time I looked from the ramparts I saw that pathetic and touching sight—a native funeral. I had climbed the worn steps, indeed, for the purpose of investigating the strange wailing cries which had come to me in the garden, and reaching the top I saw the sad little procession. There was a litter on which the dead man lay, uncoffined and just covered with a sheet, which left his feet bare and under which the form of the body was plain to see. The litter was carried by poles high on the shoulders of four men, and they proceeded in a sort of jog-trot run, with a little body of people, evidently friends and relations, following after them, all joining in the melancholy, haunting strain of the funeral song. It must have been a man of the very poorest class, for his friends wore wretched garments and the wind from the plain blew their rags about their bare legs as they ran, and even raised and moved the shroud which covered the corpse. The procession stopped and broke to let a camel caravan pass along the road. It is difficult to stop a string of camels in the middle of the road, even the funeral

procession crossing gave place to it, and it was a sight characteristic of the East—this poor little procession of death broken during its last voyage, by the riches and luxury of the country that was pouring into the town.

We turned with relief from the view, and gazed at the garden lying inside at our feet. There were the usual groves of orange and olive trees, with roses and violets beneath them, and covered walks by the side of running water. Seats and arbours are now placed about the garden, striped umbrellas sheltering comfortable chairs, and the little tables where one takes one's coffee, but one can imagine it as it first was without anything but the trees and flowers, the butterflies and the birds, the rose leaves like crimson snow on the paths, the fallen oranges lying golden in the grass.

The Mamounia has a tragic history, and tragedy seems somehow connected with it. After the death of the Prince Mamoun, an Arab palace was built at the entrance to the garden and given over to European envoys and ambassadors who came to treat with the Sultan of Morocco in their city at Marrakesh. Many stormy and difficult affairs were discussed here, and it is said that this palace was specially chosen by the representatives from European courts so that they were close to one of the city gates and could leave without delay in the event of their mission turning out disastrously.

The last of these negotiations held tragedy in itself, for the British Ambassador, Sir William Kirby Green, suddenly died here after an exceptionally stormy interview with the Sultan. Sir William had come post-haste to Marrakesh to arrange a disagreeable affair. Some adventurers had conceived the idea of starting a kingdom of the Sahara. They had occupied and actually fortified an island on the coast, had even, it is believed, fired upon Moroccan troops, and had then been overwhelmed and one of their party killed. Sir William was instructed to demand an indemnity—a portion of land for a hospital. The negotiations were long and arduous, and the interviews became more and more agitated. After one of these, on his return to the palace, the Ambassador fell down dead in his own room, and sudden death in Morocco always brings suspicion and difficulty in its wake. But the main difficulty which eventually presented itself was the removal of the body to England, for by Mohammedan law no dead infidel may be carried through the streets of a Moslem town. Fortunately for all concerned, the walls of the Mamoun gave on to the open plain. A small door was cut in it and the dead Ambassador was carried through and quickly conveyed to the coast, whence a battleship carried his body to England. This door still exists in the wall, but it is never opened. Its hinges and lock are heavy with rust, and rank vegetation blocks

its base. The indemnity was granted, and part of the garden given for a hospital. This building still stands, and near it a small mosque, but they are hardly part of the garden any more. A grove of trees and the latticed wall of green creepers hide this portion from the rest of the garden, and that part which surrounds the Mamounia Palace is unaltered save for a few more walks, a few more chairs, and the foreigners who sit about under its shady trees. The Mamounia Palace is now a hotel, the largest hotel of the Trans-Atlantic Company in Marrakesh. Its tiled entrance courts and cushioned divans remain, but round about them have sprung up bedrooms, bathrooms, huge dining and dancing halls, all the appurtenances of modern life.

CHAPTER FIVE

Marrakesh—The Tombs of the Saadien Sultans—Asni.

DRIVING towards the south of Marrakesh one comes to what is known as the Portuguese Gate. This is one of the handsomest gates in the city, and its position seems to mark the entrance to historical buildings, but for a long time it was considered to lead only to one of the poorest parts of the native city; it actually leads back into the native town, into the medley of high and massive walls and narrow lanes, always filled with a jostling crowd of animals and people, and ever since the French occupation the belief that it was but an inferior quarter of the town was encouraged by the natives, who were jealous of their great secret.

It was but six years ago when the French authorities noticed two green-tiled roofs rising above the ancient buildings of which they had no cognizance. Green tiled roofs usually mean a mosque or some sacred building, and an investigation was commenced, which resulted in the discovery of one of the most remarkable architectural treasures in all Morocco. This was the

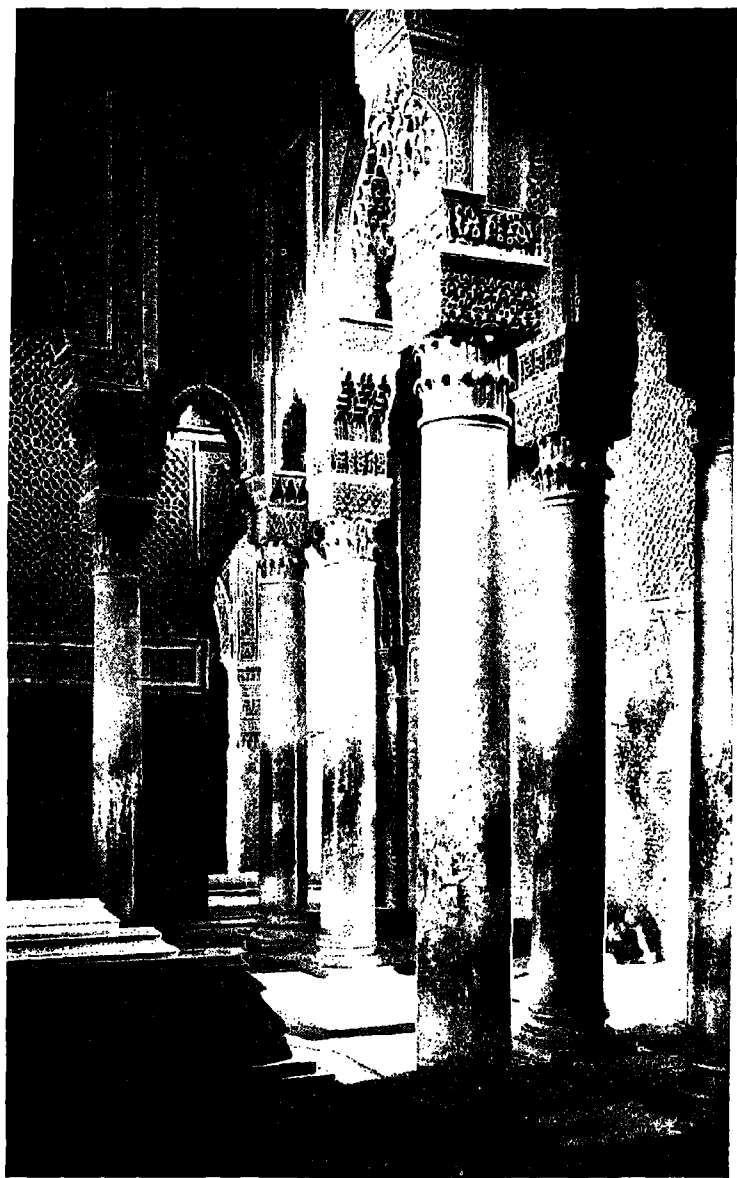
funeral palace of the Saadien Sultans, one of the most enlightened and powerful dynasties in Moroccan history.

The way in which this discovery was made reads like a tale from Froissart. Inquiries were set on foot about the mysterious green roofs, and the most evasive information was given: "Just a ruined mosque——". "An old tumble-down house, not worth your notice"! There appeared to be in reality no proper entrance, nothing but a cluster of those old, crumbling walls which one finds so often in the cities of Morocco, the remains of a palace built by some ambitious ruler. At last one day someone strolled to the end of the darkest and narrowest of these lanes to find that it ended in a tiny arch, secured by an old, rotting door. He passed through this, and groped his way along a still darker corridor, which turned and twisted like a maze, and was only wide enough to admit one person at a time; the walls were dank and the air foul. Still he pursued his way, and finally, groping in the darkness, his hands came upon the latch of the door. He opened it, entered a sunlit courtyard, and stood face to face with the arched entrance of a temple, the marble columns of which supported a cedar-wood roof of such beauty that he stood aghast and bewildered. While he remained in awe-struck silence, wondering what this might be, an old man touched his arm gently. "You have

discovered our secret, but beware what you do with the knowledge. This place is 'Horm'—holy—it is the resting-place of our Sultans, the greatest men of Morocco. No infidel has ever set foot herein. You cannot make it a mere show for your people to come and gaze at."

It was a long time before any European was allowed to visit these wonderful tombs, and even now they have to have special permission and to be accompanied by an authorised guide. No European may ever wander here alone as he can in so many other places; he is never left for one moment by the guide, and while he may gaze and admire the tombs, these should not be touched.

One enters still by the same narrow and dark passages. Indeed, were one not taken, no-one could find the way. The sudden sunlight of the courtyard is almost blinding after the darkness, but as one enters into the first burial hall the dim half-light scarcely reveals its shadowy and immense proportions. The roof is upheld by slender columns of marble, ranged round the hall in cloister-like form, and leaving a square space in the centre. Far above one's head, almost imperceptible at first in the dim light, one becomes aware of the great roof of cedar-wood, overlaid and embossed with gold. Beneath this splendid canopy lie the tombs of the greatest Sultans; their marble sarcophagi covered with their names and titles, their state and magnificence.



TOMBS OF THE SAADIEN SULTANS, MARRAKESH

In the cloisters behind the columns and the wall lie the tombs of the lesser Sultans, of their children and of their wives. The shafts of sunlight striking in from the two narrow, wooden slits near the roof, make the air spin with reflected gold, and light up the old marble, polished by the devout touches of the Faithful. All round the top of the walls are those incredible friezes of plaster-work, which look like intricate and complicated designs, but which are really formed of Arab characters, reproducing chapter after chapter of the Koran. To a European it is difficult to realise that this marvellous decoration, so fine and delicate, is actual writing, but to the Moor these very walls are voices singing the praise of Allah for ever and ever.

Standing against one of the walls of this marvellous burial hall, one cannot be surprised that the sons of Islam were anxious to keep their secret hid, lest the eternal repose of their great lords should be disturbed by the foreigner.

An extraordinary peace descends on one here—it is absolutely silent—the only sound which penetrates these dim walls is the cooing of the pigeons from the outside court, even the sound of running water is absent, the 'delights of earth have long since faded, and those who sleep in these halls have no desire for the memory of them.

Passing out again into the little central court, full of sunshine, you find one isolated tomb in

the grass—alone—with no covering but the blue sky. It is of the same style and magnificence as the sarcophagi of the great sultans in the large hall, and we asked the meaning of this lonely tomb.

“That was a great man,” our guide told us, “he was absolutely fearless and cared not for the opinion of others, and yet he had a kingly tolerance for those of his house. During his life his valiant spirit ranged far ahead of them, and his courage dared much for the good of his people—that in those days was considered dangerously advanced and unorthodox. When his time came to die he left commands that his body should be buried under the open sky and not in the great hall where his forefathers slept: ‘I shall only disturb their rest,’ he is said to have exclaimed, ‘and that I would not do: but even in death I desire that my spirit shall be free and unfettered, and I will not be shut in beneath the carved and gilded roof.’”

On one side of the courtyard is the first hall seen by the Frenchman who discovered the tombs. One enters this through a high, pillared arch, leading into a small hall, filled with tombs similar to those in the large one. At one side of this hall is a very special sarcophagus containing the body of a female saint, a most unusual thing in Morocco. The walls round her tomb are decorated with coloured mosaic, forming a shrine, which is

stained and scorched with the smoke of endless incense, burned here since time immemorial, by the women of Morocco, who spend every Friday in worship and supplication at this unique shrine.

We came here again and again, and yet again, to study this remarkable place. Our own guide, knowing us well, used to go out into the courtyard and chat with the old guardian. They realised, I think, that though we were of that hated race—infidels—we realised the sanctity of the ground to them. At any rate we were allowed to inspect the sarcophagi very closely, and some of the inscriptions were translated for us. On the tomb of the greatest emperor, El Mansour The Golden the following verses were inscribed:

"Here is the grave of him who gave to glory reason to be proud; whose banners were ever victorious, who knew all that was glorious.

"Oh, divine pity, of thy mercy pour out thy sacred flood to water this tomb, for thy goodness is inexhaustible. Perfume this soil with a perfume that will embalm the fame of him who dwells in truth in the fellowship of the All Merciful."

Over the sarcophagus which covers the Sultan, Abdallah El Ghalib Billah, are inscribed the following lines:

"Oh, traveller, who comest to visit my grave, lend me of thy bounty, thy prayers, of which I lie

now here in need. In days now passed the lives and the fortunes of my people lay in my hand and my fame spread far and wide, but now I lie in this ditch, from which no great man could save me.

"But I believed in the goodness of God, my merciful judge, and my faith hath healed me. Whoso trusteth in the mercy of the eternal knows that pardon is his, for the All Merciful has said in his great goodness, the faithful will obtain from him whatever they believe him capable of bestowing."

These Saadien Sultans who are buried here were one of the most powerful dynasties who ever reigned in Morocco. They claimed their descent directly from the prophet's daughter, Fatma, and their blood was believed to be purer than any reigning prince in Islam. They came to the South by the desire of the people, that their very presence should bestow benediction on the crops of the country, and they remained here for one hundred and fifty years, during which time peace and happiness spread abroad in the land. Their first great sultan was Abu Abdallah El Quaim Biâm-rillah, and of all of them he was the most godly. He undertook a pilgrimage to Mecca, and there he was told that both of his sons would be kings of the earth. The elder son, the Sultan El Aarej, succeeded his father as lord of the Sôus and the head of all the Mohammedans of the South. He

fought and prevailed against the Merinide Sultans, and took Marrakesh from them, thus establishing himself as supreme ruler. But after a time misfortune befell him. His younger brother, Mohammed Esh Sheikh, defeated him and imprisoned him, together with all his family. But Esh Sheikh himself died suddenly, and his Chief Vizier, in order to curry favour with the new Sultan, his heir, slew the imprisoned Sultan and his dependents, leaving the throne free for his nephew. So both these men did, indeed, become reigning sovereigns, but they both died by treachery. Esh Sheikh himself was too victorious a man not to have made many enemies. The Ottoman Sultan was afraid of him, and offered a great reward to any chieftain who would bring his head to the great Ottoman court. One of his nobles determined to win this reward, fled to the court of Esh Sheikh, claiming protection from his own master. He remained for some time, pretending to be desirous of serving in the Moroccan court, and after a minor post was assigned to him, when all suspicion had faded away, he suddenly entered the tent of the Sultan, struck off his head and carried it in haste to Algiers. It was exposed from the walls of Constantinople like that of an ordinary miscreant, but the body lies in one of the most beautiful sarcophagi in the Saadien tombs. There is a strange story to the effect that the court astronomer, who was watching the heavens on the night of the massacre, beheld

the star of the Sultan Esh Sheikh drop suddenly from its place in the sky, and he at once went to the royal palace and informed the guard that their lord was dead and that his young son, Abdallah Ghalib Billah, reigned in his stead.

There were many other famous men of this line but the greatest of all the Sultans, El Mansour, was that great warrior who fought and prevailed with the Sultan of the Sudan, wresting from his treasures the gold and jewels with which he decorated and enriched his great capital of Marrakesh. The last of them all died in the year 1659, and a new dynasty arose which, following the traditions of this part of the world, not only destroyed their palaces, but turned their dependents penniless into the world, selling the women as slaves, leaving the men to rot in the dungeons of some mountain fastness.

How the tombs have escaped destruction no-one knows, but it is surmised that the walls and lanes leading to them were deliberately blocked with rubbish and the sanctuary itself bricked up so that no-one should find it.

One of the most interesting excursions we made from Marrakesh was to the tiny village of Asni, just among the foot-hills of Atlas. We were filled with excitement and interest, for we were about to penetrate for the first time the blue veil twisted about the foot of the great mountains. Among these rocky fastnesses, where the European has,

as yet, but rarely penetrated, there are many strange customs, and a race of legendary giants are still believed to live in the mountains. Even to the most intrepid traveller, the great Atlas still remains among the unknown and mysterious lands. Among the natives the belief is still very strong that the magic of the Great Ones withholds the inquisitive explorer.

Even the Moors of the north have always been obliged to obtain the permission of the Calif and lords of the country to enter that forbidden land, and history relates how the Sultan Moulai El Hassan himself, on his return from a punitive expedition, was uncertain of his reception by the Glaoui of that day. This great chieftain, however, was wise in his generation. Not only did he replenish the exhausted stores of the Sultan, but he gave him entertainment and rest in his castle, and it is from this day that the fortunes of the Glaoui have steadily ascended.

The road from Marrakesh to Asni is completely flat, one of those magnificent and perfect motor-ing roads which the French have thrown across Morocco like a spider's web. Enough cannot be said for the excellence of these roads. In fifteen years they have opened up the whole country in such a fashion that one may travel by car as easily in Morocco as in the motherland of France.

When we began the gradual and winding ascent to the foothills we found that a miracle had

happened!—the first magic of the Atlas. The purple veil we had been so eager to penetrate seemed to have vanished into thin air. When we looked—lo!—it was behind us, obscuring from our view the fertile plain which we had just crossed. Not even the tower of Kotoubia could be seen. We were at last in the Atlas.

Asni is not really a village, it is a cluster of huts at the foot of the pass, which is guarded on its higher slopes by the castle fortress of El Glaoui. Again we had the misfortune to find this great chieftain absent, although once again a courteous invitation awaited us on our arrival at the tiny auberge on the river bank, at which travellers who have obtained permission to enter the country may refresh themselves before negotiating the pass.

This castle is very different from Glaoui's town palaces. It is a Berber stronghold of the most formidable type, built to withstand siege after siege of the ferocious, neighbouring mountain tribes. Here are dungeons in which prisoners have died in their chains, forgotten and unknown; great cellars and vaults in which stores of wheat and fodder can be kept for the provision of the garrison. But here, too, are wonderful terraces and secret gardens of delight, where choirs of birds sing unmolested among the cypresses, and the storks spread their untidy nests about the old stone fortifications.

It is a short climb from the little inn at Asni to El Glaoui's stronghold, you walk along the

stony river-bank with olive trees growing down almost to the water. There are many olive groves on the foothills of Atlas, but higher up the vegetation is only fit for the herds of goats and mountain-sheep, and very soon one reaches the snowline. It seems almost unbelievable that thus, through ice and snow, one reaches the burning desert, the great Sahara itself!

On our way down we met a little group of hillmen returning to the huts and tents of their Berber village. They wore the unmistakable black camel-hair cloak, with its ragged-looking fringe and its inset oval piece of angry red embroidery along the hem at the back. These mountain cloaks have large fringed hoods, which can be pulled right over the head, concealing the face completely and rendering the wearer a terrifying spectacle: mounted high on his horse he looks a terrible black figure of vengeance. When one meets a group of these wild horsemen, tearing down the mountain road at full gallop, one has a slight impression of the wildness of the Atlas tribes.

We motored back in the twilight and saw that the torrent that foamed past Asni was caught up as it reached the plains to work a long chain of mills, regularly placed along the roadside, and this water, irrigating the plain, is the reason of its great fertility.

CHAPTER SIX

Meknes—The Forest of Mamora—The History of Moulai Mohammed—His Entry into Meknes—"Powder Play"—Mouali Ismail and his Work—The Aissaoua—Moulai Idriss—Volubilis—The Cedar Forests.

WE left Marrakesh sorrowfully, wandering out through the palm groves to the north, the car going slowly, as though it, too, regretted to leave this marvellous oasis. The great north road, for that is what it really is, runs up the country in an almost straight line. After passing through the lower hills of the Moyen Atlas, it enters into miles and miles of barren, stony waste, covered in the early spring with a faint mantle of green, but soon to be wilted and dried by the fierce sun. Running by the side of the main road is a broad track of earth on which all animals go—a kind of "Rotten Row" in the desert! Here we passed those trains of overladen donkeys, flocks of sheep and goats, caravans of mules and camels, the latter always attempting to go off their own track and cross the road, for which this earth track has specially been made. It is the business of the camel-drivers to keep these animals on their own roadway, but they seem utterly unable to achieve this end. Again

and again we met a camel standing motionless in the centre of the road, refusing to move either to the right or the left. The day before we had left Marrakesh we had gone to the great camel market, held each Thursday on a hill outside the town walls. Here one sees this hateful animal at its very worst, biting, kicking, fighting and revelling in its horrible trick of blowing parts of its stomach out of its mouth in huge pink bubbles, which is its custom when greatly enraged. I could not imagine what these tassels of pink sausage, protruding out of the mouth of the camel could be, or what the spluttering, and spitting, hissing and snarling, which accompanied it meant. But Achmed told us in a few words:

"N'allez pas par là, Madame, ils sont très, très méchants, ces animaux. Ils veulent se battre avec n'importe qui." I thought of the market episode as a specially large camel blocked our path, bubbling at the mouth and behaving disgracefully.

Camel caravans become more infrequent, however, as one travels north, and the road gets more and more desolate. One passes no habitations on the way, save huts for the workmen and an occasional house for the overseers who are in charge of the construction of the railway, that great French enterprise which will be, when completed, even more marvellous than the roads. The system of railways, already begun, will finally connect up all the important towns in Morocco. The long

line which runs between Casablanca and Marrakesh has already reached Ben Guerir, more than half-way, and is expected to be finished by Christmas, 1928. The electrified portion runs as far as Bar Rechid; it is already in full working order and carries the huge loads of phosphates from the rich interior to the coast. The distance between Marrakesh and Casablanca is about two hundred and fifty miles, and the only village of importance one passes is Setat, a straggling, small town, a sort of horrible, poor relation to Casablanca, where picture palaces and machinery sheds and frightful petrol pumps stand next to the most dilapidated Arab hovels, and an untidy looking native Souk straggles all down the one street. Here we experienced that rather unpleasant interlude—the one thing travellers have to complain of in Morocco: a ragged and evil-smelling crowd of yelling Arab lads in filthy garments, descended upon the car like a swarm of locusts and, in spite of the chauffeur's protests that we were not getting out, attempted to tear our luggage off the car. Three suit-cases were actually taken down before we could stem this furious onslaught, and two of the lads were fighting for the honour of carrying them, the handles being torn off the cases in the scrimmage. It was no use speaking to these lads, they could only be beaten off, and we were obliged to start the car with several of them still clinging to the sides.

When we got to Casablanca all our plans were hurriedly changed. We had intended going slowly up the coast to Rabat and hence to Tangier, but we found news awaiting us which led us to give up this project. The new Sultan, Moulai Mohammed, was about to make his state entry into the town of Meknes, and we hurried on there in order to witness this great ceremony.

From Casablanca to Meknes the road runs through Rabat by way of the coast, passing Fedhala—one of the finest fishing ports here, with budding pretensions towards a plage, happily not yet realised, but otherwise the coast is flat and low, and not very interesting.

This is another of those magnificent French roads which make motoring in Morocco such a joy, and we reached Rabat in time for early lunch, leaving it again by way of the road which runs beneath the great tower of Hassan, first cousin to the Kotoubia, and crossing the river Bou Rereg by means of a bridge which had suffered greatly during the recent inundations. Directly after leaving Rabat, on the other side of the river, one turns inland, making for the great cork forest of Mamora (ten times the size of the Forest of Fontainebleau), which lies in the famous Moroccan cork district, forming an immense triangle of which the points are Casablanca, Meknes and Mehedia. It is from here that the immense quantities of cork come which yielded some years ago

as much as one hundred thousand quintals for exportation, and as the French have now organised a proper department of woods and forests, and natives are being trained for forester stations, trenching, clearing and stripping the cork, etc., an enormous increase is expected. This district has an old and sinister reputation. The natives believe it to be haunted and the abode of sorcerers, and call it the land of fear. To us it seemed one of the most beautiful places in Morocco. We saw it in the early spring. The ground is sandy, with a natural short, springy turf, and at this time it was covered with a soft, scented carpet of wild flowers—iris, narcissus, hyacinths, squills, wild daffodils—with great bushes of strongly perfumed broom and many wild pear trees, which grew apparently quite happy among the cork. We were told it was an ideal place for camping in the spring, and that it was quite safe to do so, and we registered a vow that some happy day we would return and pitch a camp here. The run through this forest was really like fairyland. The stretches of coloured flowers and green verdure under the cork trees provided a rest for the eyes after the miles of sunbaked plain, which was most refreshing. The forest seems endless, though the road runs through it for only about fifty miles and then one comes to the hilly country on the northern side of the Moyen Atlas. This is chiefly grain-growing country, and it was so strange to

watch virgin soil being reclaimed by the native. If the rainy season has been a heavy one and the earth has been properly soaked with water, the native takes more land into cultivation each year. He scratches the surface of the ground with his primitive ploughshare drawn by odd animals harnessed together. The camel and the donkey, the ox and the mule: never a pair of the same breed!

His "field" is just as far as he ploughs and back again. He attempts to uproot some of the asphodel and dwarf palms, but when the roots are too deep he just leaves them and ploughs round. Happily he leaves the jonquils unturned, with the result that they riot over the land, and edge the road like breaking foam. This promiscuous cultivation gives the countryside the look of a huge patchwork quilt, which reaches almost to the ominous walls of Meknes itself.

Meknes was in a state of great excitement when we arrived, the whole place seething with people crowding in from all over the country to do homage to the new Sultan. Moulai Mohammed, who succeeded his father as Grand Calif of Islam in November, 1927, is a young man of eighteen, with a tragic history already behind him. His father, Moulai Youssef (who had succeeded his brother Moulai Hafid, who abdicated in his favour) had been for many years under the baleful influence of his Grand Vizier, who not only attempted to create dissension between his lord

and the French Protectorate, but, by a clever ruse, persuaded the Sultan that his youngest son was a traitor and should not be left at liberty. The young man was, therefore, confined in the palace at Rabat for some years, in reality a prisoner, though such a definite term was not used. The Sultan's elder sons, unsatisfactory and degenerate young men, were by no means popular in the country, but were considered as probable heirs, for the succession to the great post of Sultan is not absolutely hereditary, although it usually remains in the family. A Moorish council of wise men choose from the Sultan's family the heir in whose hands the future of the country will be most wisely protected. Even if the Sultan himself leaves definite wishes as to his successor, it is really only settled by the agreement of this council, although due regard is given whenever possible to the Sultan's wishes. This system has its disadvantages for it usually means fighting and civil war after the death of a ruler of Islam. The other sons and male relatives of the royal family very naturally feel they must make a stand for what they consider their lawful rights, but the decree of the council stands, and their chosen candidate is proclaimed Sultan. Having been given the throne it is up to him to prove himself strong enough to keep it.

After the death of Moulai Youssef, the French Protectorate strongly advised the Moorish council

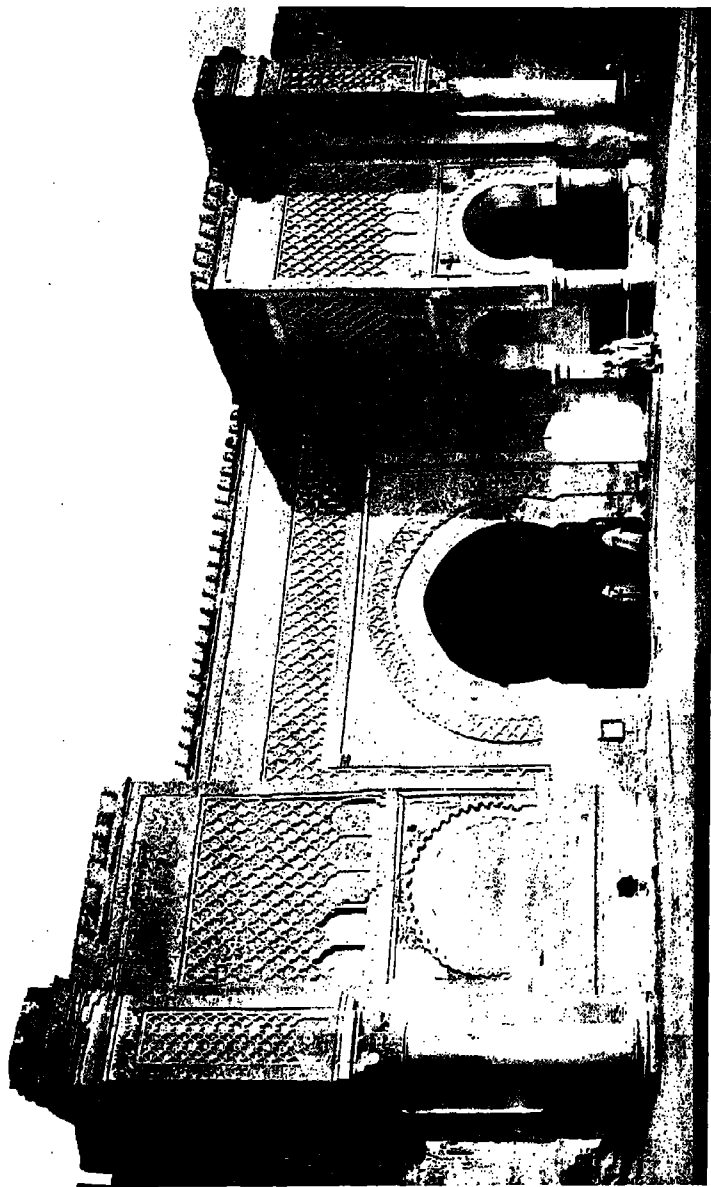
to choose the old Sultan's youngest son. They knew well that he was no traitor, but an enlightened and intelligent young man whose first consideration would be the good of his country. So young Moulai Mohammed was released from his undignified captivity and reigned in his father's stead. Tall, stately, with a face of incredible sadness and great beauty, Moulai Mohammed made a great impression on everyone who saw him. I shall never forget my first sight of this young ruler, but more of that anon!

There was no opportunity of seeing the town of Meknes until after the state entry, for it was crammed with people, and one could hardly get along the streets. The morning after we arrived we went early to the native city, but soon retreated from its jostling crowd and took refuge in the great open space, the Place El Hedime, which stretches out before the gate of the palace—the celebrated Bab Mansour—through which the Sultan would pass on his way to his own residence in Meknes. The Place El Hedime is not unlike the Jama El F'Na. Here the daily open market is held, and here we watched, during many thrilling hours, the gathering of the Caid's from all points of the compass to do homage to their new ruler. One by one, we watched them come in, riding high on their magnificent barbs, a couple of slaves running on either side, their hands holding their master's stirrup, and from two to twenty of the

most important men of the tribe following. The Caids are usually in white, but for an occasional flash of colour on a turban or embroidered wallet. They carry their long muzzle-loading guns strapped across their shoulders, a scimitar hangs in a jewelled sheath at their side, and their stirrups are much the same shape as the old Mexican stirrup, in silver, copper, or steel, and beautifully chased.

They ride on those high, peaked saddles of the Arabian warriors, which are covered with the softest and most beautiful leather, exquisitely coloured and embossed in the old Moorish fashion. These saddles descend from father to son as priceless heirlooms, and the reins and trappings of the horses remind one of pictures of a mediæval tourney. Never have I seen such a collection of fine-looking, magnificently proportioned men, skilled in every art of horsemanship, and with the bearing of princes. We counted ourselves most fortunate to have arrived a day early and witnessed this prelude to the splendid ceremony of the following day; all night long the roads resounded to the sound of hoofs, and the ancient city was alive with music and sparkling with light.

Early next morning we made our way to the place reserved for us on the flat roof of a Moorish house in the Place El Hedime itself, almost exactly opposite the Bab Mansour; already the square was packed to overflowing, and the crowd was



BAB MENSOUR IN MEKNES

being amused by weird and thrilling native music. All sorts and conditions of people were here—the veiled women, keeping close under the walls surrounding the square and crowding together in one huge group at one side of the gate. They were waiting to greet their new sovereign with the high, shrilling, “You-You”—the cry of welcome of the native women. In the crowd were many Jewesses, in their holiday garb—a very full velvet skirt in crimson, green or purple, a silk shawl crossed over the breast, and a brightly-coloured kerchief twisted among their black hair, the fringe of which hung down the back. Here, too, were unveiled hill-women, their long burnous of camel’s-hair in red and white stripes secured round their heads and concealing under their ample folds the babies strapped on their backs. The water-carriers, the fruit vendors, the cake and sweetmeat sellers with the palette-shaped board from which they scrape their scraps of sticky merchandise, all pushed their way among the myriads of people. My admiration went out to the troop of horsemen who arrived shortly after we did, and endeavoured to keep a clear road through this seething mass of humanity. They backed their horses in the very face of the populace, and the well-trained animals seemed in no way disturbed that people hung on to their tails or crawled under their bellies and squatted there. As the hour drew nearer the crowd became

even more dense, a native military band marched down and took its stand on one side of the gate, native troops in the smart uniform of the French Zouave lined the route (their French officers with the white burnous over their blue uniform in no way disturbing the oriental picture) and soon all was in readiness for the procession. Just at the entry of the gate a group of old men, in flowing garments of patriarchs, awaited the Sultan. These were the Pashas, who held high posts in the district round about Meknes, and we were privately informed that they had, almost without exception, been of the Grand Vizier's party before the old Sultan's death—men who had voted for the imprisonment of this young Sultan, whom they were now obliged to receive, and to whom they must pay homage. Soon the sound of acclaiming voices was heard in the distance, and we knew the royal procession was coming up the hill. A curiously modern note was struck by the half dozen motor cars that rushed ahead, with blinds tightly drawn down, containing the ladies of the royal harem and their attendants. After this followed a troop of Senegalese soldiers, mounted and gorgeously attired, then a troop on foot. Close upon them followed a group of chieftains and Caids—not those of the district, who were to receive and welcome the Sultan in Meknes, but those who had accompanied him from Fez, where he had entered in state the week before. Imme-

diately behind them came four led horses, superb animals, carrying the royal saddles of various colours, and embroidered heavily with gold and silver. Each of these was led by a standard-bearer, who bore aloft the flags with the royal insignia.

After a space came the advance members of the private bodyguard—the Mokhaznis—in their long white robes and scarlet, cone-shaped caps. In the centre of this group was the Sultan himself, riding a silver-grey Arab, and seated on one of the royal saddles of state of his forefathers. He had chosen the most simple saddle of them all, almost without any decoration, of moss-green leather with no embroidery but the narrowest edge of gold. Two of the Mokhaznis walked on either side of his horse, holding the stirrup, and two more waved long white silk scarves to keep away the flies. Directly behind him came an important personage, the carrier of the royal umbrella. This was more like a small green canopy, and was in green velvet, decorated with gold, matching the saddle exactly in colour, and was held on a high pole over the royal head.

The Sultan himself was dressed from head to foot in robes of the purest white, unrelieved by any jewel or decoration; his slender figure swayed slightly to the movement of his horse as he inclined his head gravely, greeting his subjects as he passed through their midst. We watched him come slowly

down the street, most of the people sinking to their knees as he passed. When the procession came into the space before the gate it was greeted by high, piercing cries, almost like the screams of birds in flight—the greeting of the veiled women. The Sultan held up his hand and a space was made, out of the gate rode a magnificent figure, an enormous native on a coal-black horse, wearing the royal livery and hailing his lord with upheld hand. This was the head of the royal household in Meknes and was the greeting of that house to its new lord on his arrival. It was also the signal that the critical moment had arrived, when the patriarchs of the district might advance and do their reverence to one whom they had long treated as an outcast.

We had full view of the Sultan at this moment, and I watched his face carefully; it was one of the saddest young faces I had ever seen, the faint smile when he had returned the joyful welcome of his subjects faded from his lips and his face became like a stone—expressionless and cold—as he watched the old men come forward in groups of three, their hands on their hearts, making the three solemn bows of the salaam, with heads inclined. Immediately after this they prostrated themselves on the ground, kissing the dust before his horse's feet.

The Sultan's face remained immovable till all the old men had finished their homage—then he rode forward—without a sign, without a move-

ment in their direction: saluting the French flag, he disappeared within the gate of his palace.

After the last of the royal procession had followed their master through the gate the crowd in the square broke up and, for a while, confusion reigned. Soon we saw them congregating at the lower end of the square in front of the Bab Mansour and a great open space as large as a football field was left clear in the centre. We watched these proceedings with great interest, which was heightened by the arrival of a number of wild-looking horsemen, who all rode towards the farther end, and formed a long line across the square. At a given signal a number detached themselves from this long line and rode forward at a furious gallop, They descended on us like the Assyrians of old, threw up their reins, fired their long guns into the air and flung them up above their heads, catching them again, seizing their reins and pulling their steeds up on their haunches at only a few yards distance from us! This is the famous Fantasia or Powder Play, in which every Moorish horseman delights. It takes place on all great festivals and at times of big rejoicing. Never have I witnessed such feats of horsemanship; the skill of these wild men is entrancing to watch! They came down in groups of ten, a dozen or even twenty at a time, a fresh group starting as the preceding one fires the volley, so that it is in reality

a continuous performance, which sometimes goes on for the space of two hours.

Dancing, feasting and music occupy the rest of the day and continue far into the night; from our hotel across the valley we heard the ceaseless beat of the tom-tom, which seemed to resound first from one quarter and then from another, and only ceased with the early morning.

The wisdom of Maréchal Lyauty in planning the new European towns at some little distance from the native cities in Morocco, cannot be too highly commended. One's view is never spoiled by garish modern houses, the native towns are left intact as they have always been, and the native life goes on there undisturbed. The new quarter is generally built just outside the walls of the ancient city, in some place where it will not in any way distract the attention of the sightseer from that which he had come to gaze upon, and the advantage of this, especially from a hygienic point of view, can hardly be overestimated. East and West never mix easily, native and European life are two very different things. The ingenious way in which the French Protectorate has overcome this difficulty in Morocco is admirable.

The modern town of Meknes is separated by a valley from the ancient city; on the farther side of this valley the ground rises again, and here the huge Trans-Atlantic Hotel is situated, the view

from its terraced gardens being unique. One looks straight across the intervening green at the flat roofs, minarets and crenellated Meknes the ancient. A bloody and terrible past belongs to this city, and somehow one becomes aware of this the moment one enters its gates. It was built by that most terrible Sultan, Moulai Ismail, a contemporary of Louis XIV, the Sultan who possessed eight hundred and sixty-seven children and over four thousand wives and concubines.

Life and death were of no more account to this man than the breaking of eggshells. When he wished to test the sharpness of his scimitar he swept off the head of the nearest slave; when he wished to prove the accuracy of his aim he stood the servants of his household up against the wall and transfixed them with spears hurled from various distances; when he wished to strengthen the walls of his fortresses he stiffened the cement with the blood of Christian captives. He indulged every caprice of his ferocious nature and his negro blood, regardless of any consequences: if he wanted anything the whole nation must, if necessary, be sacrificed in order to obtain it at once.

Even after all these centuries Morocco still shudders at the memory of Moulai Ismail's atrocities, which will never be forgotten as long as one stone in Meknes remains upon another, for Meknes is the real record of his life. His passion for building was a mania, a lust, in reality a kind of madness.

He kept many architects who went in terror of their lives, who were obliged to produce for him innumerable plans of palaces, fortresses, pleasure gardens, anything that might happily catch the royal fancy, and to try by doing so to keep their souls in their bodies. These plans were carried out in a kind of frenzy. No sooner was one palace begun than the Sultan's whim favoured a newer plan. His builders exhausted the store of material faster than it could be produced, so the walls of one palace were torn down to begin the building of another, before the mortar was dry between the stones. The Sultan could not even wait for the proper demolition of the walls, slaves and captives were forced to remove the foundations so that the walls should fall upon them and new material should be immediately at hand to commence a new building.

Mr. V. C. Scott O'Connor, in his fascinating book *A Vision of Morocco* tells us:

“Thirty thousand criminals taken from the jails of Morocco, twenty-five thousand unfortunate Christian captives, among whom were sculptors, carpenters and blacksmiths, astronomers, engineers, physicians, all the diligent that a malign fate had cast upon the shores of Morocco, were driven daily in chains to the scene of their labours, were penned by night in dark and subterranean chambers dug for their habitation,

and when they died were used with a ferocious economy that may have been tinged with some darker superstition, as building material and immured in the rising walls, their blood mixed with the cement that still holds them together in its grip."

It is no wonder that the walls of Meknes cry out in the silence of the night!

From this insane fury of building there remains little to-day but miles and miles of enormous walls, leading apparently nowhere. They stretch out from the city like great tentacles that have lost their grip. For this crazy monarch actually had a project of connecting Marrakesh, nearly three hundred miles away, with his city of Meknes by a walled road, "For," he said, "blind beggars will then have no necessity for anyone to lead them."

Needless to say this walled road was never completed, although it was begun and some forty miles on one side rose to a certain height; even now, far away in the country, ruined watch-towers and blocks of stone are found, parts of this mad frenzy of building.

Moulai Ismail put himself on equality with the enlightened monarchs of Christendom. His grandiose ideas of building were said not to be with the idea of creating beautiful houses and palaces, but with a hope of impressing Europe with the super-greatness and magnificence of Islam.

He asked the French King, Louis Quatorze, for one of his daughters as a wife, and was deeply chagrined that his demand was refused—he sent a message to the unfortunate James the Second of England, then in exile in France, that if he had wished to change his religion (James had reverted to the Roman Church) he should have become a Mohammedan—the only religion fit for kings!

It is said that he killed thirty-six thousand persons *with his own hand* and his own sons and daughters went in constant danger of their lives. Anyone, in short, who crossed his will or even contradicted him was immediately killed, so it may well be imagined that his court was a court of terror. Even those whom he seemed to care for (as far as this mad king could care for anyone) were the victims of his uncontrolled fits of fury. His favourite son, unable to stand the terrible life in his father's capital any longer, revolted against him and raised a small force to protect himself. This pathetic little army was naturally soon subdued, the prince and his friends taken prisoners, and Moulai Ismail marched out of Meknes with a dozen executioners at the head of his army to wreak vengeance upon them. The son's commander-in-chief was nailed to a plank and sawn in two and the prince himself, though he fell down at his father's feet and implored his forgiveness, was almost as harshly treated. If

ever he cared for anyone it was for his eldest son, but revolt he could not tolerate—his son's right hand and right foot were cut off, the bleeding stumps burned to cauterise them and he was left to the mercy of the few followers who dared to succour him and bring him to his own house in Meknes. The Sultan returned in state, followed by his army to his capital. When he arrived in Meknes he prostrated himself in the dust before his son's house and prayed that the All Merciful Allah should judge between them. It is said that this is the solitary instance in all his life that he evinced any affection or regard for the feelings of any human being, and it is certain that if he ever cared for anybody it was for this son on whom he wreaked such terrible vengeance. This same son died of his injuries four days later, and Moulai Ismail, still more embittered and furious, pursued his career of cruelty and madness till the end of his life. Of all his buildings nothing is left but crumbling walls and vast open courts; the only relic of all his constructive mania is that wonderful gate, said to be the finest in Morocco—the Bab Mansour—and even this he did not finish: it was completed by one of his successors. Its design, however, was composed by one of the Christian slaves of Ismail's terrible court, and the graceful marble columns which adorn it were wrenched from the exquisite ruins of Rome's last outpost in this land, the beautiful city of Volubilis,

whose name has been immortalised for us by that incomparable flower the convolvulus.

Moulai Ismail's desecrating hands spared nothing; when his architects required marble pillars, carved cornices and stone balustrades Volubilis was plundered, and although little or nothing of his own building remains, these delicate and graceful tokens from Roman craftsmen, by which Volubilis was made a thing of such beauty, have withstood the fury of his onslaught. These columns still stand as the supports of the many pergolas in the public gardens which now decorate the fortifications of Meknes—those lovely gardens running along all the lowest slope of the East side of the town. There are many pepper trees, roses, mimosa, geraniums and innumerable creepers, shady lawns and grassy walks, and at the end, hidden by evergreens, a Greek theatre has recently been built—the gift of Monsieur and Madame Sylvain. Here, a year or two ago, a company of the Comédie Française played *Electra* amidst the most ideal surroundings.

The native town of Meknes is a straggling place, and I cannot see how it could be otherwise. It had to cluster round the royal palace, and parts of it were continually demolished for a whim of the Sultan, when he wished to enlarge any part of his own palace. In particular a whole quarter of it was destroyed in order to build stables to house twelve thousand horses, each of which had

a groom and a Christian slave to wait upon him, for after his passion for building, Moulai Ismail's next passion was for horses. Their housing, their food, their attendants, cost him far more money and trouble than he spent on any of his human belongings. So, as a town, Meknes had not much chance. To the south-west lies the Mellah—the Jewish quarter—by far the most untidy Mellah I have ever seen. Coming in from Rabat one enters the town by the west gate and, after passing through the Place El Hedime, descends into the busy, crowded main street on the eastern side. In order to cross the valley to the modern town one passes through the eastern gate, a narrow but pretentious door leading from the lower walls. The valley used to be alive with the hum of water mills, for Meknes has always been famous for its clear and sparkling water, but only a few of the mills are still in use, and the rest of the valley is now a bower of orchards and olive groves. Another road crosses this valley, passing out from the town by a higher gate, and this leads past one of the most interesting things in the country, a tile kiln, so old that time has forgotten when it was first started. Here were made those wonderful tiles of which the secret has been lost for so many generations. True, they are still manufactured, and to all outward appearance are the same at first, but their colour fades to a dingy grey in a quarter of a century, whereas those tiles

made six hundred years ago, although cracked and broken, still glow with the living colour which was burnt into them then.

In the northern wall stands the great gate of Ber Daine, the highest in the town, through which comes the road from Tangiers, and it is in an open space in front of this gate that the strange ritual of the Aissaoua takes place. This strange festival seems to reincarnate the bloody spirit of Moulai Ismail in his people, yet curiously enough it purports to be an ecstasy of worship which has a faint resemblance to the flagellation of the Middle Ages. The Aissaoua are an order, founded by Sidi Mohammed Ben Assi, a saint and a very holy man in Moslem eyes. His tomb stands just outside the gate and this is the goal of all the pilgrimages that come during the yearly celebration of his anniversary. Their act of worship is a kind of frenzy in which everyone who assists, men, women and children, inflict injuries upon themselves and upon their neighbours with the object of shedding blood. By the letting of blood and the humiliation and subjection of the flesh they believe they can release their spirits, purifying and cleansing them for union with God. It is indeed difficult to follow the workings of the minds of this strange and terrible sect, for their so-called acts of worship develop into the most terrible orgies that still exist in the world. During the yearly celebration masses of people crowd to

this tomb, those on horseback slashing with their whips at the crowd: women throw themselves under the feet of the mounted pilgrims. These pilgrims come marching in ranks, but as they near the entrance to the tomb they break away in wild rushes, pushing, squeezing, forcing their way amongst the mass. In their endeavours to enter the narrow gate which opens on to the sanctuary, they fling themselves against the walls, smearing these with the blood from their wounds, screaming and shrieking at the top of their voices. It is a most extraordinary and very terrible scene, and can only be watched from a safe distance under proper protection for, as the frenzy reaches its height, the pilgrims become mad, and completely irresponsible for what they do. The scenes towards sunset and as the night comes on become quite indescribable; the most savage bands are then prevented from entering the city; they have become worse than animals—beasts drunk with blood, and the wildest orgies take place in the Moslem cemetery outside the walls.

And all this to the incessant cry of "Allah, Allah, the All Merciful, the All Pitiful, Allah, Allah, Allah!"

Beyond the ruins of the Sultan's palace still lies the ancient water garden, or Aguedal, which is now turned into a botanical garden, where the rarest trees and flowers are grown, and where still

stands a tiny mosque, long disused and falling into ruin but still bright with some of the turquoise-coloured tiles and the coloured mosaics of ancient days. After the Aguedal in Marrakesh, however, no other water garden can hold one, and we drove on through flowery meadows (from which it is said the carpet makers take their colour designs) to a charming little grove which is given over to the first peaceful and joyous occupation we saw in Meknes.

A group of beautiful peacocks wandered about in a field of jonquils; guinea fowl, peahens, cocks and fowls of the most superb beauty and size transported themselves on the grass. This, we were told proudly, is a model poultry farm, where the natives are taught and shown what can be done with the ordinary domestic fowl if properly fed and reared under suitable conditions. It was an ideal place for such a purpose, and the natives who were tending the poultry seemed interested and happy in their work. It is by institutions such as this that the French Protectorate have so wisely made friends with the native. They are taught all sorts of useful industries, the newest implements for agriculture are provided for them and they are shown how to use them, the old designs of the beautiful Moorish pottery and carpets, jewels and decorations are highly praised, and native craftsmen are encouraged to repeat these ancient and beautiful designs instead of the more modern

patterns which come from Europe. The native, though a child in many ways, is no fool, and when he sees Europeans admiring and appreciating the ancient designs and work of his ancestors, his soul is filled with pride, and he is only too glad to copy them so that they shall not be lost to the world.

Returning to our hotel at the other side of the valley we watched the sunset, and thought how fair a place was this ancient city of Meknes—if one gets upon a farther hill and views it from a distance! It seems incredible that these walls, rosy in the sunset, could have witnessed the terrible events that took place within them. But in spite of its beauty a spirit of menace broods over the native city and will, I think, never be dispelled as long as such scenes as the Passion of the Aissaoua takes places just outside it.

Later on in the night it seemed as though the stars had fallen, the city was alive with brilliant points of light in the velvet darkness. The cry of the muezzin at night in a Moorish town is always strange and arresting, but in Meknes there is a man whose voice is so vibrant that when he utters the call to prayer it carries right across the valley, and, lying asleep in our rooms in the hotel, we were awakened by the sound. But my ears were still full of the shriek of the Aissaoua, and the voice from the minaret awakened nothing but horror

in my mind, so often must the walls of Meknes have re-echoed to such shrill, piercing cries for mercy—a mercy unknown to him who built it.

There are two lovely cities one may visit from Meknes, both interesting in the highest degree, but from very different points of view. They lie looking at each other, the one in the hills, the other in the sunny plain beneath. One is Moorish of the Moors, the most sacred place in Morocco, to which all pilgrimages come—all who would be holy must visit this shrine at least once or twice during their lifetime. This is the rock-bound city of Moulai Idriss, which surrounds the tomb of the saint, and from which it is believed that special virtue flows.

The city lies on two precipitous hills, one slightly higher than the other, and the tomb of the saint lies in the hollow between the two. No infidel has ever been allowed to remain in this holy town after sunset, and the house of the French Governor has been built outside the walls, thereby again showing the consideration of the French for native feeling.

Moulai Idriss lies about sixty kilometres from Meknes, first across the fertile valley and then around the sloping shoulders of the mountains that guard the north-east. On the way one passes pilgrims coming to or from the shrine, sometimes singly, sometimes in groups. At the anniversary of the saint enormous caravans and pilgrimages

arrive from all parts of the country and camp on the surrounding hillsides. Very different these pilgrims from those fanatics who belong to the Aissaoua! Those who come to Moulai Idriss come with praise and thankfulness in their hearts, peace and gentleness seem to be their attributes, and the wild and fanatical spirit so often dominating their religion seems to drop from them as they approach this holy town.

One comes upon the town unawares, the rocky spurs on which it is built start up suddenly in the centre of the valley, the higher mountains surrounding them. It is from the lowest slopes of one of these mountains, coming round one of the ample bends, that the first view bursts upon one—the astounding sight of a large city in the heart of the wild mountains. Seen from the road it seems to stand like an eagle, high above, and you wonder how your car will ever get up the rocky cliffs that form its base. After a short ascent of hairpin corners the car seems to leap directly into the town, rushing through the narrow Souks, driving round the outside battlements till it pauses for a brief moment in the market square between the two hills on which the town stands. Here is the saint's tomb with its high minaret, but it is unwise to linger, the interest of the infidel in this holy place is fiercely resented by the fanatical inhabitants, who have conceded a favour in allowing a car to go through the town

at all. The actual inhabitants of Moulai Idriss provide the strangest contrast to the pilgrims who visit the shrine. Maybe it is that they consider themselves the guardians of this most holy place, and while welcoming those of their own nation who come to do reverence to it, they resent the presence of the foreigner. Such wild, strange, angry faces glared at us as we drove through! Nowhere else in Morocco is the traveller made so unwelcome or does he see so clearly the ancient soul of Islam in revolt against his presence: we drove quickly through the upper town and out of the high gate. After turning a sharp angle the road runs along the face of the hill to the north of the town: here on a grassy plateau—the spot from which my illustration was taken—we sat and looked across to the city, seeing it far more intimately than when we had rushed through its streets. A vivid imagination can easily see in the clouds of golden dust from Moulai Idriss, those special streams of virtue which devout Believers hold to fill the sacred place.

The hillside where we rested rolled a carpet of purple iris at our feet, of which we gathered great armfuls, and as we drove on the call to prayer sounded faintly across the valley. The only mention of the holy city of Moulai Idriss in the French Guide was to the effect that one could lunch excellently at The Hermitage—the now famous auberge farther down the road—and on our way to Volu-



MOULAY IDRIS

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bilus we passed this most delectable spot. As to the luncheon mentioned I cannot say anything but the situation of the auberge is ideal, in a grove of olive trees, with seats and tables set out beneath the little rose-covered pergolas.

From here the road drops away rather more steeply and soon one runs out into the open plain towards Volubilus. In contrast to Moulai Idriss this town was built in the open without regard to maundering tribes, for Rome believed herself secure, even in this remote African outpost.

Volubilus was built about 2000 B.C., and but for Moulai Ismail we should have a far more perfect monument of ancient Roman architecture, the climate here being so equable that it might have stood as the Romans left it. It was, as its guide pointed out, not the force of besieging armies or the fury of the elements that laid it low, but a thieving king who tore it to pieces for his pleasure. As it is, the ruins have been most carefully excavated, and restored as much as possible by the unfailing energy and discernment of the famous French archæologist, Monsieur O'Farrell, who accompanied us all over the ancient site, pointing out to us the remains of baths, houses, temples, olive presses, mills, etc. A desolate stretch of ruins which was once the main street, cries out against the wanton king who wrenched its marble columns from their place to decorate his palace at Meknes, destroyed its great temple of the

Goddess Algeia for the sake of its sculptured cornices and who even tore up the mosaic pavements for his courtyards. The great stones that floored the Forum remain intact, those at the entrance still showing the grooves of the iron gateposts and there are two exquisite arches which must have formed its ends; innumerable stones inscribed with names, dates and epitaphs have been carefully collected and stand as nearly as possible in their original positions. The great triumphal arch which evidently upheld an enormous equestrian statue of one of the Roman Emperors has been practically reworked, but alas! scarcely a trace of the statue itself can be found, though a stone description of it was discovered on one of the blocks at the base.

The great thing about Volubilis is the marvelous distribution of the water. It was a city, not only of the usual luxurious Roman baths, but of many fountains, the water for these being brought in the inimitable Roman manner by an aqueduct from far over the mountains, the remains of which may be seen outside the walls of Moulai Idriss. The site itself also abounded in springs, so that those ancient Romans, even in this military outpost, must have lived in the height of luxury. That they lived in the splendid fashion of their day is further proved by the beautiful ornaments and jewels found among the ruins. The well-known statue of the bronze dog is the greatest

treasure; it is intact save for one paw, and is a most beautiful work of art. But there are also necklaces, bracelets, rings and many varieties of pottery which testifies to the importance of this ancient outpost of Rome in Africa.

The archæologist lives in a bower of flowers, and when we left he pressed roses and jonquils into our hands. To our northern eyes the profusion of roses growing in the open in early February seemed little short of miraculous, but he assured us that in that sun-drenched plain such things were quite ordinary—he had wonderful fruit and vegetables all the year round. It is yet another example of the intelligence and wisdom always shown by the Romans in the choice of their sites.

On one sunny afternoon we made yet another trip from Meknes and this pleased me enormously. It was to the great cedar forests in the mountains of the Middle Atlas, and was, I think, one of the most beautiful excursions I made in Africa. I have seen many forests, but never before had I seen a real forest of cedars till I explored the Middle Atlas. The cork tree does not grow at a higher altitude than one thousand metres, but the cedars do not begin till one thousand five hundred metres of altitude is reached, and they grow on happily as high as an altitude of two thousand and two thousand five hundred metres. The cedar

is by far the most popular wood for decoration in Morocco. The ceilings of all the most famous mosques, colleges and palaces have for centuries been fashioned of this beautiful wood, which is hard enough to take the most delicate carving and to resist the action of the atmosphere upon it, thus the ceilings and cornices carved six or seven hundred years ago, but for a slight change of colour, are in much the same condition as they were on the day they left the craftsmen's hands. The action of the sun upon the wood turns it grey—a very soft grey velvet effect it has—and the beauty of these ancient ceilings and cornices can be imagined. Most of the cedar wood used in decorations all over the country comes from the cedar forests in the Middle Atlas, and yet they seem hardly to have been touched. The great trees stand tier upon tier, mounting the hill, with a carpet of green fern beneath them. There is something especially quiet and significant about these cedar forests and the carpet of ferns, instead of the usual one of coloured flowers, adds to this sense of separateness and dignity.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Rabat—The Museum—The Oudaiya Gardens—The Tour Hassan
—Salé—Native Mat Making—Visit to a Harem—Marriage
Customs—Recipes, Potions and Charms.

THE railway from Meknes to Rabat runs through the northern hills until it reaches Petit Jean, about half the distance between the two points. Petit Jean is the junction for the north-west section of Morocco, a kind of Clapham Junction in the desert, as the land immediately surrounding it is flat and stony. Through this place come all the trains from Tangiers to Fez, as well as those running cross-country from east to west. The station is full of Arabs, who think the railway wonderful, and travel by it on every possible occasion, even on the shortest journey. They travel in special carriages, without seats, squatting on the floor in the usual Moorish fashion. The scenery after Petit Jean is dull, and as one crosses the agricultural country where all the corn is grown one often sees the odd animals yoked together, and the Berber tents on the long low hills as one nears Kenitra. This is an important station on the line, as it is the minor goods depôt for all exports.

Rabat is, without doubt, the finest railway terminus in Morocco. It is in a very deep cutting running right through the town so as not to disturb the view, for Rabat is the present capital of Morocco—the chief residence of the Sultan—and also the headquarters of the French Protectorate. The new town has some of the finest modern buildings in the country, but as usual the greatest care has been taken that these shall not in any way interfere with the rugged old Moslem city.

The curious name of Rabat comes from an old Arab word, and means "to tie up" (to enmesh) because this place was the scene of the last furious battle with rebellious tribes in very olden days, before Morocco was welded into an empire. The tribes were all driven up to this point of the coast and surrounded by the Sultan's victorious armies. Short of retreating into the sea they had no place of retirement, they were completely enmeshed, and for them the game was over.

The Moslem town is, of course, enclosed in walls, to which various gates give access. It lies on the coast, and is divided from its neighbour and rival town of Salé by the Bou Rereg river, a tidal stream which can be entered by ships at certain hours when the tide is high.

Rabat and Salé have looked at each other across this river with jealousy and disgust for many generations, and full often has the river run with blood in the violent skirmishes between the

two towns. Now they tolerate each other with studied indifference, and Salé sulks behind her white walls as she looks across at her prosperous sister which the French Protectorate have so greatly delighted to honour.

The genius of Maréchal Lyauty has transformed what was formerly a Moslem barracks and the coastal defence of the town into a garden of real delight. Behind the walls of the Kasbak and the Oudaiya there stands the Medersa, or college, which has been transformed into a public museum. Its walls are decorated with many beautiful relics, and also with the horrifying chains with which prisoners were linked together by neck and ankles. These ghastly shackles were so fixed about the prisoner that if he died upon the march, or during his day's work, his body had to be dragged about by his companion until the return to the prison in the evening, when it could be cut from its chains, which was the only way of removing it.

This museum contains a fine armoury of ancient Moorish weapons, damascened scimitars, old guns and blunderbusses, pistols, strange knives, many of them with gold and mother-of-pearl inlay, others with their hilts encrusted with precious stones. This building also holds a kind of permanent exhibition of the carpets made in the region, Rabat being the head of the carpet trade in Morocco, all the finest rugs—excepting those of the special tribes—coming from here.

Here it is that one may see some of the most precious and ancient carpets in the country, suspended from the walls, the designs of which are copied by the native industry of carpet makers, which is being revived under French direction in all the important towns. In Rabat itself this industry has attained the dignity of a special school, as there are some of the best models here of which the town is very jealous and never lends, and these are copied very accurately by native women. The orders given for these are so numerous that one has to wait a long time to obtain a specimen—only special workers being employed in the school, and the orders being executed in strict rotation. There is a good exhibition of the native rugs of Morocco, including specimens to be found nowhere else. These come from the countries of Glaoui, Beni Mguild, Laiane and Giugo being well represented.

The various halls of this building have been given the names of different places. Thus the Hall of Rabat contains, in addition to the carpets, special embroideries on silk, showing the "flat point" of Rabat and the "crossed point" of Salé; also the embroideries made with Salé thread; there are carved and painted wooden tables, chairs, coffee stands, flower stands, stools, etc. On some of these wooden articles the design of the well-known Moorish mosaic is repeated in vivid colour, while the pattern of the cedar-wood carv-

ings of halls and ceilings is cut on others. It is in this hall that the best specimens of the armoury are to be seen, and the whole place is arranged like an old Moorish interior, with its divans, its beds of parade, and its carved ceiling.

In the Hall of Fez, where deep, cushioned windows give directly on to the garden, there is a comprehensive collection of the ancient pottery of Fez and Meknes, together with some very beautiful enamels. It is natural that the old workers in clay who possessed that zealously-guarded secret of tinting their tiles to resemble living colour, should have used the same secret colouring in their pottery. The master potters of old said that Allah gave them pieces of the blue sky for their turquoise, waves of the sea for their dark blue, the colour of the grass and the trees for their greens, the hue of the rose for their crimson, and rays of the sun itself for their yellow. A pretty fancy this, and one which almost tempts one to believe it when one sees the rich, pure colour they achieved.

In the Hall of Fez there is some of the ancient furniture from that town, wedding chests, carved and painted, some heavily decorated bridal coffers embossed and overlaid with gold, stools and carved lounge divans, and tiny little coffrettes for jewels: also many specimens of the Moorish eating tables, very low, with four legs no higher than five inches from the ground. Some of these

have no tops, just curved rims, into which the huge brass or silver trays are fitted; others again have elaborate stands that fold up flat. None of them stand higher than six inches from the ground, and all are beautifully decorated with carving or painting. In this hall is shown in cases under glass a good collection of ancient Moorish jewellery from Fez and from Meknes—earrings, bracelets, collars and head ornaments in beaten gold, set with the favourite cloudy-green emerald and pearl drops. The head ornaments often take the shape of a round medallion, beautifully chased and either enamelled or studded with precious stones. This hangs in the centre of the forehead, and is worn only by married women. The earrings are very large, huge rings, with pearls surrounding them or hanging from them in tassels, but the long pendant earrings are the favourites, and these are almost invariably set with large jewels surrounded by gold. The bracelets are invariably heavy rings, chased in gold, and very small. I wondered how ever they were put on, as it seemed that they would scarcely go over the tiniest hand, and they had no fastening: I was told they were slipped on to the women's wrists when they were quite young, and never taken off.

There were a few specimens of jewellery from the native women of the South, strange collars formed of coral beads threaded in meshes like chain purses; bulky, heavy ornaments worn round

the neck and tied with silk threads at the back. There was a great deal of amber in long strings, and one collar of turquoise and coral and silver beads, which was the most beautiful and original of them all.

The well-known mats of straw made in Salé were shown here in great profusion, but as we saw them being manufactured in Salé itself it was more interesting to inspect them there.

One very curious item in this museum was a collection of girdles in the old Fez embroidery, which is made no more now. These belts are very long, wrapped twice round the body, and hanging down with fringed ends at the side. They reminded me of long pieces of striped silk, woven in colours, very heavy and thick, and it was not till I examined them closely that I realised that each stripe was a very close and intricate pattern embroidered by hand in silk threads. Each one must have taken months to make, and been a veritable *tour de force* for the eyes. In a little room by itself was a collection of old embroideries on linen, and cotton, and muslin from all over the country, for the native women are celebrated for this special work. These embroideries came from Fez, Meknes, Rabat, Salé, Azzemour, Chechaouene, and Tetouan. It is really very wonderful work, and we spent a long time in examining it. The embroidery entirely covers the material so that no background at all is to be seen. A pattern

in arabesques, curves, or the most complicated Moorish designs is worked over the whole length of the material so that it has the effect of patterned cloth, and one must look closely indeed to realise that the pattern is worked on by hand. These embroideries are used for cushions, for robes, for the ends of the towels with which one wipes one's hands between the courses at a meal, or the embroidered cloths laid across one's knees as serviettes.

In addition to these there were original brocades and pieces of gold and silver tissue, very old, so thick that they would stand by themselves. They came from Tetouan and Fez, which towns were celebrated for the manufacture of the most magnificent materials for robes of state, which are worn, under their burnous, by the Moors on great occasions.

Then there was another hall called, for some unknown reason, the *Salon de Coiffeur*. This contained many ancient documents and maps and patents of nobility, as well as strange writings and manuscripts in Arabic. The collection is supposed to come from one of the universities in Fez: much more interesting to me, however, was a tiny collection of musical instruments, some of which are still in use. There were curious drums of all sizes, some absolutely microscopic, pipes, and a string instrument like a one-string guitar of triangular shape with a very long arm.

There are so many unusual and fascinating objects to see here, and one longs to stay for hours looking at them. Fortunately the Oudaiya Gardens are directly opposite the Trans-Atlantic Hotel, and one can go over morning after morning and study these ancient curios of the country at one's leisure.

But all the time one is in this most delightful museum one is filled with a desire to go out into the lovely garden, on which one gazes from each window of the various halls. Such a garden! with curtains of brilliant bougainvillæa hanging from the walls, and low trimmed hedges of rosemary all round its shady walks.

One enters the garden by two terraces, the lower one leading down to the rosebeds, occupying the centre, and it is here that the rosemary hedges separate one lovely bed from another. This whole *plaisance* is contained within the shell of the old walls which were the outer ramparts of the Kasbak, and the curtains of bougainvillæa and cascades of other delicious smelling creepers hang from these walls. Here one sees that rare tropical shrub, the Kiff, from which the intoxicating native tobacco is made. Its flowers resemble enormous madonna lily blooms, and are very heavily scented. The whole place is heavy with perfume, and the scent of the rosemary hedges in the hot sun makes it a place to linger and dream in. At sunset, just when the tower of the old

Medersa turns rose-colour in the glow, many hawks, looking green against the sky, fly out from the tower and circle round with raucous cries. The old stones are full of their nests. There are many storks' nests upon the ramparts, and it was while we were in Rabat that the storks returned—always a day of great rejoicing in the town, for it means that spring has really come.

On the second terrace of the Kasbak Garden one looks through the lovely Moorish arch forming a picture of the river with the white walls of Salé on the other side. Walking through the arch and down a few steps one finds one is in a Moorish café built on the rocks that form the river wall of the Kasbak; here are tables and chairs set out in little arbours—a long stone seat runs along the edge of the river wall, where tiny Arab waiting boys rush forward as soon as you appear and offer you round cushions of leather to sit on, and press upon you the mint tea, the Spanish chocolate, the strange, hard Moorish cakes, or even try to tempt an obvious stranger by what they call "tost" (toast). Beyond this long seat are various little winding paths leading to ancient outposts of defence, where one may drink one's tea and watch the river business on the Rabat Quay or look out towards the foaming and dangerous bar at the mouth of the Bou Rereg. Everyone who comes to Rabat spends much time in this garden. It is said to be patterned after the gardens of

Andalusia and although I know many gardens in Andalusia I know nothing like this.

A narrow path leads from the Moorish café up to what is left of the native quarter of the Oudaiya. This was the original settlement, the barracks and the fortress held by the tribe of the Oudaiya, and it is perched upon the farthestmost point of the rock at the estuary. The houses indeed appear as though built in the rock itself.

There are two more entrance gates to this Kasbak of the Oudaiya, one leading directly into the Medersa and the garden, and the other leading through the dark arches of the tower to the native quarter and the upper portion of the old fortress. From the roof of the tower one of the finest views of Rabat is to be seen, and it is the custom to come up here and see the sunset.

Looking directly towards the west there lies before one the old Moorish cemetery, stretching along the dunes of the sea coast for a very long way, and when we first saw it it was a perfect blaze of marigolds. The place is literally clustered with gravestones, interrupted here and there with the white dome of a Marabout's tomb. Watching this graveyard as we did constantly from our hotel windows which gave directly on to it, it appeared at sunset as if the dead were rising from their graves. Every now and then a white, veiled figure would suddenly arise from one of the graves and move silently away. We discovered that it

was the custom of the pious Mohammedans to spend long hours in deep meditation, quite motionless, upon the grave of a relative or dear friend. In their bowed attitude, wrapped in a white burnous and sitting immovable as a Moslem does in meditation, they resembled the headstones so greatly that at first one was not aware of their presence—it was only when they got up to go away that one realised that they were human beings.

Every Friday this cemetery is crowded with Moslem women who come ostensibly to do reverence to the dead, but who really come to chat to their friends and sit in the sun. These, of course, are only the women of the lower orders, yet they are scrupulously veiled and this is the only place where they may sit together out of doors. On the 20th March each year the cemetery is the scene of a fête, believed to be the survival of the ancient rite to the Goddess of Spring. Everyone dons their finest robes and their most precious jewels, especially the little girls, in whose honour this is now held. With one hand on a tombstone they invoke the name of Lalla Ksaba, an occult divinity whom they hope will provide for them a good husband. The fête, as one sees it nowadays, is charming and pretty, but there is full reason to believe it was far from being so in the olden days.

From the other side of this tower one looks directly down on to the flat-roofed houses of the

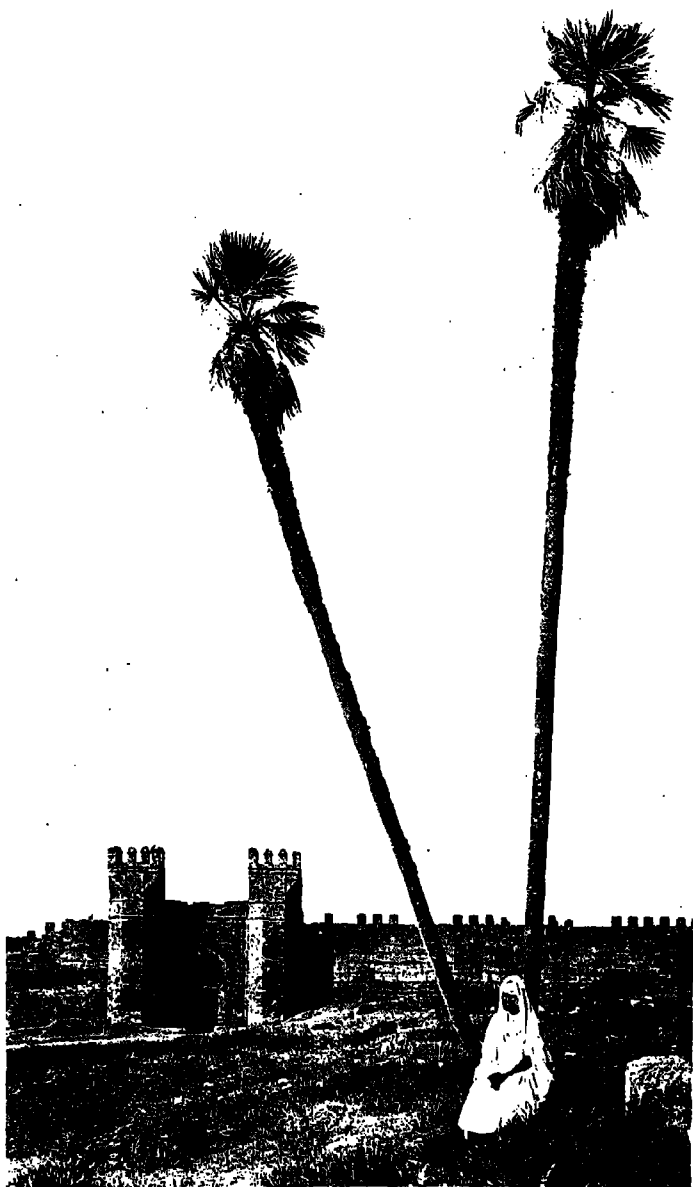
Kasbak's native quarter, with its tiny mosque at the farther end, lit up when the sun sets with one small light. The evening hour always draws the women to the housetops, and it is here, if one is lucky, that one may get a glimpse of them unveiled, playing with their babies or working on the embroidery for which they are so famous.

The Hotel Trans-Atlantic at Rabat is one of the best in Africa. Part of an old Arab house, it has been most cleverly converted, added to and enlarged. Its kitchen is famous throughout Morocco, and I must say it is one of the most comfortable hotels we ever stayed in. It is situated almost directly opposite the Oudaiya Gardens, and is a wonderful centre from which to view the old town. A broad road leads past the hotel to the river, quay, and the ferry, but one turns sharply right by the Rue des Consuls to reach the Souks. This part of the native town is built on the side of a hill which slopes sharply down to the river. The Souks are therefore on an incline, difficult to visit with comfort as the small lanes are so narrow and full of traffic. There is an enormous charcoal market which appears to be the hub of this small universe and there are enormous fondouks for the accommodation of caravans and merchandise. The main interest in Rabat however, does not lie in its Souks but more in its history and monuments.

The Tour Hassan, for instance, is one of its great treasures. This stands outside the walls that encircle the native city, dividing it from the modern town, and lies on the Eastern side. It may be approached by the road running along the river bank or direct from the modern town itself. It was built by the victorious Sultan, Jakoub El Mansour—he who built the Kotoubia—and it is a strange thing that while both these great towers stand as a perpetual memorial of his magnificence, the mosques of which they form the minarets have both fallen into hopeless ruins. Some of the ruined walls and pillars of the mosque which once lay round the Tour Hassan still stand, giving one an idea of this prodigious edifice, the largest mosque ever known in Morocco, but it was doomed never to be finished. In 1756 a violent earthquake shock almost destroyed Rabat, the sea rushed in upon the town and it is undoubtedly from this date that the final demolition of the mosque took place.

From the Zaer Gate a small road leads to what now remains of Chella, that fabulous town whose riches were said to pass all belief, so that the donkeys were shod with gold and the dogs had chains of the same precious metal!

Only the surrounding walls of Chella remain intact. One enters by a pretentious gate, only to find an open field sloping sharply down, ruins of the tombs of the Merinide Sultans. But the



THE GATE AND OLD WALLS OF SHELLA

ancient town dates from very early days. The Phœnicians were here and after them the Romans, but of the history of the town in those days there is little record. In the eighth century it belonged to the victorious Berghonata, who withstood many sieges, but at last ceded the town to the Almoraide Sultans about 1060.

It was abandoned in favour of the sea coast town of Salé in 1154, and in the fourteenth century it became the necropolis of the Sultans of the Merinide dynasty. It is the remains of these tombs which provide the great interest in Chella to-day: the most important sarcophagus is that of the black Sultan, Abu El Hassane Ali, who lies where once rose a temple of great beauty to cover his resting-place. All that remains now to mark the spot is a façade of rose-coloured tiles in which is a small arch of the Moorish shape. Not far from this place is the tomb of his wife—"Sun of the Morning" was her name—and she was a European, though from what country and family we know not. She became a Mohammedan in order to marry the man she loved, and her memory is revered in the name of "Lella Chella"—the Lady of Chella. In the little mosque not far away, is the remains of one of the most beautiful Mirabs (praying chambers) in which it is said the Prophet himself once prayed. For some time after this it was believed to contain such virtue and holiness that anyone who went round

it seven times on his knees in prayer was considered to have acquired the same virtue as that bestowed by a pilgrimage to Mecca.

This last resting-place of so much splendour has long since lost its roof, thrust off by high growing trees which now invade its most sacred courts, tearing down the halls which were built with so much devotion and care; rank grass grows between the stones of the floor and the strangling arms of many creepers have pulled apart the remaining walls. A spring of clear water rises in the centre of the ruins, and in olden days formed the fountain of ablutions for this palace. Now the women of the country bring the fleeces of their flocks to be cleansed of all impurity in this water, before sending them to the wool merchants. We saw a number of these women with huge bundles of fleece, carried on their heads, coming away from the bank of the stream as we walked up the hill. Alas, for Chella! All her glory has departed: she is given over to browsing cattle and vagrant gipsies who find shelter amidst her ruins.

One crosses the river to Salé with a strange medley of native folk. It is far more amusing to cross like this than to charter a boat of one's own, even though one may be crushed in between veiled women and gregarious native soldiers who smoke rank tobacco and carry evil-smelling bundles. Landing on the sandy river beach at Salé provides continuous amusement, as one is usually carried

on the shoulders of a stalwart native over the wet sand on to the little wooden jetty. There are no cliffs or rocks surrounding Salé. It lies on a flat tongue of sand stretched far out to sea, and a dusty road bordered by tall eucalyptus trees, a quarter of a mile in length, has to be traversed before one reaches the city gates, for Salé, like all Moorish towns, is enclosed in walls and divided into various quarters. Coming towards us down this road as we went along was a gigantic negro clad in coloured rags, dancing in the dust and beating a small drum. Our guide brushed past him quickly, refusing to let him come near us. "He is a fraud," he said, "not even a genuine beggar! To my knowledge he has a farm of his own not far from here."

A little farther down the road, however, we came upon a genuine performer. This was a little lad, not more than five years of age, who gyrated solemnly to his father's playing upon a small reed instrument. He was clad in a little white robe with a wreath of flowers on his head, and he danced a strange and stately measure in the road beside us, for our pleasure, watching us with large, serious eyes. We gave him a few coins which he at once handed to his father, then he took a flower from his wreath and handed it to us with a salaam. All this time he never smiled, but when I found some bon-bons in my bag and told the guide to ask his father if he might have

them, his eyes glistened and he held out his hand quickly. "He is only a baby," the guide said, "but he will be a fine dancer some day, he has a true sense of rhythm." It was strange to see such a tiny tot salaam so profoundly and dancing with such grace and we asked for his history, but the guide knew little of the strange couple—"the man is his father and takes great care of him," was all he could tell us. "He never allows him to dance if he is tired, and he always has fresh flowers for his wreath each day—they have only been here at the gates of Salé a few months." We saw them again as we came out of the town later on and they were sitting together, eating out of bowls, having their supper side by side as if they had been two friends instead of father and baby son.

Salé has long, narrow streets, confusing and rather noisy Souks where the usual embroiderers, leather and brass workers, tailors and dyers ply their trade. What interested me most of all was the Souk of the straw mats, which is the special industry of the place. These mats—"mattes"—are made of split osier boughs, dyed in various bright colours and woven in special patterns. They are used for wall coverings, a kind of high dado of matting being placed all round the walls of the modern houses and hotels when no tiling or mosaic is used.

The Souks where these mats are made are much larger than any others, as the mats are sometimes

of huge sizes and require a great deal of space. All the work is done by quite young boys, who often acquire such proficiency that they work without patterns, making up a design out of their heads as they go on. A huge wooden frame is laid flat on the ground, coarse string being threaded across it. In and out of these strings the boys weave the coloured osier twigs with such astonishing rapidity that one sees a pattern actually growing as they work. The matting when finished is quite close and firm, not unlike Indian matting, but with intricate and very beautiful designs woven into it in the most brilliant colours. This matting is made any length; if long pieces are required it is coiled in a huge roll at the end of the frame till the whole thing is woven in one long piece. We stayed a long time watching the work, they never stopped, but worked in long shifts—four hours at a time is nothing out of the way—and they seem thoroughly to enjoy it and to be interested in it. One boy who was specially pointed out to us—he could not have been more than ten years of age—was quite famous for his work: “He has already invented three new patterns himself, he is one of the best designers in the Souk, and never works to anyone else’s pattern,” we were told. We saw this matting all over Morocco in modern houses, and thought it a most beautiful wall covering; clean and light, it suited the country admirably and toned in with the older style of

decoration very well. The collection of straw mats in the museum in Rabat is very interesting, but it is not until one has seen the boys at work that one realises what real artistry is required to make it.

At the top of the town is a fine old Medersa, or college, with good carvings and tiles and a very beautiful door. Even women are permitted to visit this college, but strangers are warned not to go into the Mirab, or praying chamber.

Behind the grand mosque one comes to the cemetery of Salé, with some very remarkable tombs. There is one with green tiled floor, and walls and fine porcelain columns arranged like a cloister. Another is the celebrated gallerie du Sidi Ben Hassoum: this saint was one of the holiest men of his day in Morocco, and his tomb is still a spot of great veneration. He left his own people, a very wild and ferocious tribe, because they never stopped fighting and he could obtain no time for prayer and meditation, and came to Salé, where his goodness and piety soon made him renowned. His own folk, jealous of his reputation as holy man in another town, journeyed to Salé to implore him to return, and begged him tell them why he had left them. The Marabout filled a vase with sea water and set it before them: "Why is this water—so disturbed and turbulent in the sea—so quiet and restful in this glass?" he asked. "Because you have taken

it out of the sea," they answered. "That is the reason I am here," he told them, "apart from my own people I can remain calm and at peace." His compatriots understood the parable and no longer urged him to return to them. His tomb is still an oracle, and the people of Salé who come to it with questions believe the saint answers them. He especially protects travellers; those going on a voyage come the evening before their departure and place on his cenotaph little sticks of coloured wood, arranging them in special orders and designs. These sticks remain all night, and in the morning their owners come early, eagerly looking to see if the design they have formed with the wooden sticks is intact. If the pattern remains almost unaltered it is the augury of a happy and prosperous voyage. If, on the contrary, the design is in disarray it is a bad omen for the journey, which is then generally postponed.

One of the peculiarities of Salé is the extreme severity with which its women are guarded. There is no question here of a veil held across the lower portion of the face! The Haik, or head covering, in Salé is of the very thickest material, and instead of being folded across the face so that both eyes appear, it is worn crossed over the crown of the head, leaving a tiny triangle from which one eye only appears, just enough to permit the woman to see where she is going when walking

in the street, even if she is allowed to do this, which is not often the case. Among the poorer classes it is the man who goes out and buys the provisions necessary for his family; in the upper classes the husband is obliged to promise in his marriage contract that his wife shall never be obliged to leave the house, not even to go to the baths on Friday, the usual custom of the Moroccan woman. Even the roof garden is denied to the women of Salé, and the courtyard of their houses is practically the only change they have from their own apartments. And yet they appear not to languish under such treatment. They are happy and contented, and do not wish to change. I heard of a French lady who, visiting a harem in Salé, was condoled with by its inmates that she had, perforce, to wear woollen materials sometimes (she was dressed in a very beautiful tailor-made costume), while they wore silk and satin every day of their lives!

This reminds me of an amusing episode which happened to my friend and myself when visiting the ladies of a harem during our stay in Morocco. There were many ladies in this harem, for in addition to the two wives, there were mothers and sisters and sisters-in-law and cousins, as well as many servants and slaves. In fact the entire female ramification of the family had been invited to meet us. Of course none of the ladies spoke anything but Arabic, and a French lady conversant

with that language very kindly consented to accompany and interpret for us.

After the customary compliments had been exchanged, and the jewels and robes displayed, our own garments looked at, examined and even fingered, with interest, conversation flagged a little and then became more personal.

"Ask the ladies if they ever go out driving," I said, knowing their husband had several motor cars, and that in many places Moorish women go out in cars with the blinds tightly drawn. Looks of horror appeared when the question was asked. "No, they would hate to go out—how had we come—in a closed carriage?"

"No we came on foot"—their house was only a few steps from the hotel.

"On foot in the streets—but doubtless with many servants accompanying us?"

"No, alone——"

"Alone in the streets—had no-one looked at us?"

"Yes, many people had looked at us."

"How terrible, how dreadful for you!"

Then the oldest wife ventured a question herself.

"Had the ladies come across the sea alone—had their husbands permitted it?"

The interpreter answered them—"The older lady is a widow—the younger lady is not married."

"A widow—how sad—but doubtless her sons console her."

"She has no children."

"No children—how terrible—Allah has not been merciful to her. What does she do?"

"She writes books." At this there was a scream of horror.

"Writes books—how too dreadful—how absolutely terrible—what a sad, sad fate for a woman!"

They patted my hands in deep sympathy, and tears actually stood in their eyes.

We had a number of delightful friends in Rabat—people who knew many of the higher placed Moors connected with the Court, and we were taken by them to some of the most interesting Moorish houses in the town. The first one we visited belonged to a young nobleman who was just about to be married; the ground floor of his house was being prepared for the reception of his wife, and the huge room at the one side—her special suite—was empty save for the large silver mirrors on the walls at either end, her own divan with its coverings and special cushions not being yet installed.

He received us on the second floor, in a large hall—the Hall of the Ceremonies—with the divans set across the end instead of running down the side, thus giving a great deal of space for the dancing women and the various acrobatic and juggling entertainments with which he often amused his young friends. This young man, the head of his house (his father was dead) was a very

enlightened gentleman of about twenty-six years of age, he spoke quite good French, had even been in Europe and was the first Moor whom I had met who was *encourant* with European events. It was delightful at last to be able to talk directly with anyone of the country without an interpreter, and we made the very most of our opportunity. He told us that he was very good friends with a number of the French officers and gentlemen of the Protectorate, whose head-quarters are in Rabat itself: that he was, indeed, a great friend of the highly placed Moor who fills the unique position of "liaison officer" between the Sultan's court and the Protectorate. This friend was about to marry our host's only sister, and he told us that he had persuaded his sister to learn French, so that later on she might be able to take some part in her husband's interests. While we were drinking our mint tea he told us much of the feeling in Morocco about the French Protectorate: how wise and diplomatic they had been in their dealings with the Moors, how much good they were really doing in the country. "We who understand, know that our country is being built up and developed, the old times are gone and even Islam must move a little as civilisation progresses. Our religion is kept inviolate and our customs are respected; great developments in business and trade of every kind are being brought to our land, and the agriculture of the country is advancing in a miraculous

fashion. Even the natives see that the French have given them peace, and they can afford to cultivate their land without the constant interruption of wars and fighting."

I asked this young man many questions as to the condition of the Moorish women, and he answered me quite frankly and openly: "That is rather a difficult topic of conversation," he said with a smile, "for it will not be easy for me, madam, as the European does not understand the feelings of our women. I know that in India, in Turkey and in the Far East, many changes are taking place in that regard, but it is not so in Morocco. Here the women hold most tenaciously to the old traditions—they are really jealous of any innovation or change in the established customs. They have no desire to be free, they wish to feel themselves protected, sheltered and taken care of. You may be told different stories, but I assure you they are not true. The women of Morocco have great influence with their husbands and with their sons, and no Moor will deny it, but it is a hidden and secret influence, they wish to guard the sacredness of their home life, and you will meet no Moorish gentleman who does not appreciate that at its full value. No outsider," he went on, "has any idea of the real home life in our country. We men go out into the world, certainly, nowadays, we even travel. We receive and entertain strangers in our apartments but very, very seldom

do we bring even the most distinguished foreigner into the apartments of our wives and mothers."

I was sorry to hear his last words, for I had been about to ask if I might not see his sister, and quite suddenly he forestalled me. "Of course, madam, I am speaking of the general feeling—the custom which has been traditional from time immemorial in this country and which is still most strictly kept by all the older people. We who live here in Rabat and have been in close connection with the French for the last ten years, are beginning to see things slightly differently. I, myself, have persuaded my sister to learn French as she will shortly be married to my great friend, a Moorish gentleman, who has much to do with European courts, and I should be greatly honoured if you would allow me to take you up to her apartments and if you would pay her a visit."

It was so exactly what we had hoped for and we assented with delight. Our host sent one of the servants to his sister's rooms, saying he would bring some European ladies to see her in ten minutes, and then took us up on to his roof garden and showed us his flowers. All the town of Rabat lay before us, the flat roofs seemed to stretch away far into the distance, the Tour Hassan standing sentinel on one side, the blue ocean stretching away on the other. The broad stream of Bou Rereg curled away like a glittering snake, and the busy ferries between Rabat and Salé were

plying, heavily laden, from shore to shore. From this roof we had a wonderful view of the towered walls of the Oudaiya, the lazy storks standing on one leg, asleep beside their untidy nests, which always look to me like the remains of a huge bonfire.

We admired our host's flowers, geraniums and roses and palms and orange trees, and trellises covered with the glorious, purple Morning Glory, that overruns every wall in Rabat. "We see the most marvellous sunsets from this roof," he told us, "even I, who am accustomed to them from childhood, wonder sometimes at the vivid colouring and the extraordinary pure yellow light."

A summons came that his sister was ready to receive us, and we went down from the roof to the top floor, which contained her apartments. She was a very pretty girl of about sixteen, with the loveliest eyes and her dark hair coiled in a linen coif, which Moorish women wear until they marry. She was shy, and only spoke a few words, until Madame R——, the French lady who accompanied us and who had met her before, was struck with a brilliant idea. She begged our host to leave us with his sister for a short time. "I am sure she is shy of speaking French before you," she told him, "she will talk more easily if you are not there." So he got up and left us, and Madame R—— proved to be correct. In a few minutes we were all chatting merrily.

Our young hostess showed us her work—she was knitting some intricate design in silk—a purse for her future husband, and we asked her to tell us about her approaching marriage. She said, very modestly, that Moorish girls were not allowed to speak of their own marriage before it took place, though if it interested us she would tell us of the marriage of a friend of hers, which had taken place recently.

She told us how, when a young Moorish gentleman wished to marry, his parents suggested to him the names of various families who had eligible daughters, most of whom were already known to his mother. The young man will always allow his parents to make the choice as he, of course, is unable to see any of the proposed young ladies himself. When the prospective bride is decided upon and the marriage settlements arranged to the satisfaction of both families, the mother of the young man comes to visit her prospective daughter-in-law in her parents' house, the bride herself often being unaware of the real importance of this interview. If the visit of the bridegroom's mother proves satisfactory, the young lady is informed of her good fortune, the marriage settlement is drawn up and the wedding day arranged. All, of course, without the contracting parties ever having seen each other. There are tales of a certain face to be seen at such and such a window of an evening if anyone cared to glance

in that direction, but among the upper classes it is almost unheard of that the bridegroom sees his bride before he is actually married to her.

Once all the arrangements are completed the girl and the female members of the family now begin to prepare for the great event. Many beautiful robes are embroidered, jewels are reset, cushions are made and covered, the whole house is in a turmoil.

Meanwhile in the bridegroom's house the apartments of his future wife are busily prepared. One of the long rooms around the centre court of the house is emptied and cleaned. A new divan with beds of parade at either end is magnificently upholstered and provided with many new and beautiful cushions. If the bridegroom is a rich man, he generally hangs silver mirrors on either end of the room and possibly installs a clock, for which the Moroccans have a great fancy. The fact as to whether the clock goes or not is of no account, the owning of many clocks testifies, in some obscure way, that enlightenment has fallen upon the family who owns them, and they are very frequently given as great treasures to the shrine of a saint!

A week before the marriage day the bride is arrayed in her wedding garments, wearing all the jewels she possesses, her head enveloped for the first time in the coloured silk scarf, which is the sign of wifehood, and which is invariably given

by the husband, taking the place of the wedding ring. In this attire she receives, still in her parents' house, visits of congratulation from all her girl friends; the entire female acquaintance of the family come to wish her joy, and the whole week is spent in feasting and entertainment.

There is no marriage ceremony whatever, but at the end of the week of rejoicing the bride, arrayed in her wedding garments, is carried in great state in a closed litter, to her husband's home. Here she is received by the women of the family, who conduct her—seated—to one of the beds of parade, drawing thick curtains of silk around her. Meanwhile her husband has been feasting with his friends—as a matter of fact the new wife arrives towards the end of the last ceremonial dinner—and his slaves announce to him that his wife is in her apartments ready to receive him. He immediately bids farewell to his guests—the most ostentatious hurry being shown, which is part of the ceremony—and partakes himself to the bridal apartment. When he enters the women of his household draw aside the silken curtains with great ceremony, his bride descends and walks towards him, and the young couple see each other for the first time.

During the seven following days the young wife sees no one but her husband and her own personal body slave. After these days rejoicing and feasting begin anew, and the young wife entertains,

this time in her husband's house, all her family, friends and relations. From now on she sees no man but her husband, her father, and her brothers, if she has any; if her husband has brothers she never sees them, even if they and their wives live under the same paternal roof—the wives meet together but never, by any chance, the brothers and sister-in-law.

The sign that a Moorish woman has guests in her apartment is a line of little red slippers standing outside the steps to her reception hall—the curtains of which are then scrupulously drawn and the door closed. No Moorish husband would dream of entering his wife's apartment if he sees red babouches standing outside: his wife has visitors, and though it may be his sister-in-law, his mother-in-law, or his own cousins, he may not enter. The law is rigidly adhered to by all Mohammedan men.

It is said that this very custom, so simple to circumvent, has given rise to many intrigues—what easier than to put a pair of red slippers outside the curtain and close the inner door to the apartment!—the husband retires in perfect confidence that his wife is entertaining a lady. But intrigue is a difficult thing in the ordinary harem. It can only be accomplished by the aid of several slaves, or servants, and the unfortunate Moorish woman who lends herself to it is for ever after in the hands of her servants

should they choose to expose her. More than this, she goes in danger of her life, for her husband will kill her if she proves unfaithful to him, and his act would have the entire support of every Moslem man.

The Mohammedan is allowed four legitimate wives, though few are rich enough to possess so many, for each wife means additional apartments, robes and jewels, and many extra servants and slaves. If the first wife, after three or four years, does not give her husband a son, he generally takes a second wife, and these wives sometimes become very good friends, but as a rule the more wives the more trouble, and the intrigue and jealousy in a large harem is perfectly terrible.

But to return to our little Moorish hostess. Having told us all she could of marriage she sought for subjects with which to amuse us. She read to us out of a little French book, pleased to show us how good was her accent; she showed us her jewels, which comprised heavy gold bracelets, two gold wrist watches, but no rings, and when we asked her she told us that rings were not the favourite jewel of a Moorish lady, and that no unmarried woman ever wore one. She apologised for the fact that she had not many jewels, though unmarried women seldom possessed them, but she would have many

later on, she informed us, as her husband was making her special presents of jewellery he had bought in Europe. She had most beautiful little hands and feet, touched with henna in the correct fashion, but she had no khol round her eyes or rouge on her face, as that again is the property of the married women. Before we left her she told us how happy she considered herself in that she was about to marry so great a friend of her brother's, and then caught herself up sharply—"but I must not speak of my marriage," she remembered. "I think it must be that I have been speaking in a foreign tongue—for one forgets one's own customs when one talks of foreign lands where things are so different." We felt we should now take our leave, and immediately she sent for her brother, who escorted us, in the dignified Moorish fashion, to the door, thanking us for having honoured his house. As we were about to bid him good-bye, we were suddenly interrupted by the arrival of another guest, who chanced to be his great friend—his sister's fiancé. I was about to congratulate him on his charming prospective bride, when Madame R—— stopped me. "You must not mention her to him," she said in a whisper—"it is not etiquette to speak to a Moorish man of his wife or any female member of his family—you could only say 'I hope all is well with your house.'"

The next day we visited another harem, belonging to one of the most prominent and richest men in Rabat. He was old and one of the most extraordinarily ugly men I have ever seen, and must have had a good deal of negro blood in his veins. But he had married a very important personage, the grand-daughter of the famous Cherifa, who lived in Tangiers, a European girl who had married an Arab chief, and been allowed to retain her own religion, though legitimately married to a Mohammedan. By her extraordinary life of unselfish devotion and by her very great intelligence, this lady was allowed to carry her husband's title of Cherif after his death. All her children and grandchildren enjoyed special privileges, and when we arrived to pay our visit at the door of her grand-daughter's house, we found a group of native musicians serenading "the grand-daughter of the Cherifa."

This was a very luxurious harem, but it was terrible to us to see this beautiful girl of eighteen married to a horrible old man! She was quite lovely to look at, in a pale blue silk robe, with the ceremonial kaftan of silk gauze over it. Many ropes of pearls encircled her neck, and she wore heavy earrings, enormous head ornaments, and innumerable bracelets. Her eyes were kholed and her cheeks rouged, but even this could not spoil her great beauty. Her hands and feet were

simply lovely, and again the henna upon them did not detract from but seemed to enhance their beauty.

She spoke quite a little French, and even a few words of English, and she was evidently very pleased to receive us. Never have I seen so many women as there were in that harem—an aunt, a mother-in-law, three cousins, and quite a large number of lady guests. They all crowded round us, and after the first shyness wore off, asked the usual questions:

“Had we come across the sea alone; were we not frightened to travel by ourselves; were we married; how many children had we; had we always to wear woollen clothes; had we always to keep hats on our heads; were not our shoes very uncomfortable to walk in . . . ?!”

This time great interest was displayed in my young friend who accompanied me. “Was she my daughter? Was she married?” On being told she was not married everyone asked the same question: “How old is she?”

“Twenty-five,” was the answer.

“Well, she has still a chance,” they said. “You should marry her quickly—there is none too much time left!” A great babel of conversation arose, and it was hardly possible for the young Cherifa to translate quickly enough. At last she conveyed to me that her friends were offering recipes by which the young lady might further enhance

her charms. Every one of the women had some special thing. They were certain that if she blacked her eyes with khol it would render her more attractive. They pressed upon us two recipes for khol—one being, to roast a toad to cinders, pound it up, and use the powder for the eyes! The other was more complicated, and consisted of a mixture of antimony, Sudanese pepper, and the powdered kernels of black olives, these together with the head of a clove carnation, were to be ground to powder, dried in the sun, and mixed with perfume—but—the mixing must be done by seven young girls, and finished off by a wise woman, otherwise it had no virtue! Another lady recommended as a face wash, pulped lemons mixed with green coffee, dried in the sun and mixed again with the white of eggs. This, she asserted, gave a brilliance to the complexion which could not be rivalled, but she was immediately silenced by a friend who said she had a better recipe than that—to make paste of butter and orange flowers, and spread it on the face, keeping it on all night. We were given recipes to make the eyes bright and shiny; to do this it was necessary to cook the peel of an onion in honey and bathe the eyes with it as hot as one could bear it. To whiten the teeth we were told to fill the mouth with thyme, and keep it there for two hours, binding the lips with bandages and breathing only through the nose.

Several other indescribable recipes were offered to us, but the young Cherifa hesitated to translate them. They asked me how I spent my days at home, and this time I was too wary to say I wrote books. I said, without thinking, that I told stories, and was immediately besieged to tell them one. I thought of the story of "Beauty and the Beast," but it seemed too personal for that harem, so I told them the tale, which the young Cherifa translated to them, of "Aucassin and Nicolette," and our visit drew out for an unconscionable time. As I told the story heads appeared around the curtains, and the room seemed to become fuller and fuller of women. When it was finished I was besieged with questions, and one very pertinent remark was made—"Ah! it all came from the lady going out of her tower at night!"

They begged me to come again and tell them another story, and had we not been leaving the next day I should certainly have done so, they were so amused and interested. A short hour after we returned to our hotel a large basket of flowers was brought for me from the Cherifa, and a tiny gold Fatma hand for my friend—"That Allah might be merciful to her and send her soon a good husband!"

CHAPTER EIGHT

Tangiers—Early History—Government by Statute—The Kasbah
—The Grand Soukko—The Little Soukko—Educational Pro-
gress—La Montana—El Menebhi—Tetouan—Sultan of Spanish
Morocco's Visit to Mosque—The Perfume Seller—More Charms
and Potions.

TANGIERS is one of the most beautiful and amusing places I have ever seen. But it is undoubtedly Opera Bouffe! Its superb situation, its magnificent climate, its inhabitants and its visitors, all add to one's original impression of the drop scene at a theatre.

Our first personal view of it from the terraces of the Continental Hotel the morning after we had arrived, showed us a background of sparkling sea, cloudless sky, vivid mountains across the bay, and a party of extravagantly dressed society people just arrived from a yacht in the harbour. It was difficult not to imagine the stage, a dais with the chorus of a good George Edwardes production just about to form up behind it.

In order to bring ourselves back to earth and realise that we were actually living in this moving picture ourselves, we walked down the balustraded terrace which led from the hotel direct into the native town, but here again the sense of

musical comedy pursued us. Other visitors, equally fashionably (and unsuitably) attired, mounted on donkeys, were being led about by Arabs. There were the usual men selling carpets and silk scarves, picturesque natives sitting in doorways, open shops giving on to the street where yet more visitors were hurriedly buying numbers of oriental goods—made in Birmingham—make-believe beggars, street musicians, flower sellers—we had evidently slipped suddenly into the second act.

All the time we were in Tangiers we could never quite lose the sense of watching a play, for the life itself is quite as unusual and amusing as its inhabitants, its scenery, and its visitors. More or less this has always been so, for the history of Tangiers goes very far back. It goes as far back, in fact, as Mr. Rober-Raynaud tells us, as the fabled Hercules, when he broke through the strip of land which united Europe and Africa, piling up his columns on either side and creating the natural harbour, into which the Carthaginians sailed their galleys, and called it Tingis. In those ancient days Tingis had little or no importance; it was not until the regular services of the sea invested such places as the Straits of Gibraltar, the Dardanelles, and the Suez Canal with such international value that the town and port of Tangiers became of immense and intense interest to both Africa and Europe.

The entrance to the Mediterranean is the principal gateway to the East; one of its quays is Gibraltar, another is Ceuta, the third, and possibly the most important, is Tangiers. This is the reason why it has been judged wise to make it international, thereby insuring the interests of all. So beautiful Tangiers belongs to no one particular Power, but is ruled by what is now known as a statute. This comprises the chancellories of four nations—the French, the Spanish, the English, and the representative of the Sultan of Morocco himself. Italy and America are represented by their Consuls, as are also Holland, Belgium, and Portugal, as these countries did not join the Statute, and questions relating to them in any form, which crop up in Tangiers, are extremely difficult to settle. This system of government (which has to be renewed every twelve years) seems to answer, though from the visitor's point of view it adds to the humour of the situation.

Those Powers, for instance, who have remained outside the Statute need not obey its laws, and cannot be interfered with further than remonstrations. It was decided that there was too much gambling in Tangiers, from which the town itself benefited nothing, and the Statute made a strenuous effort to put it down, closing the three principal Casinos. These establishments remained closed for one week, and then suddenly re-opened under Italian and American management, and

the gambling goes on rather more furiously than before; everyone participates, saying how dreadful this gambling is, how terrible to have so many playing halls, and going regularly to the Casinos themselves.

The smallest matter becomes so international that the administration of justice is more than complicated, so each Consulate keeps a private judge of its own, and the number of different judges one meets at a private tea-party becomes quite bewildering. Further, this has its advantages as well as its humorous side. You have only to take your own particular judge aside, whisper a few sweet nothings into his ear, and ask how far the laws of their country can be stretched to let you do what you like. With diplomatic management the laws of European countries, as everyone knows, can be stretched to an astonishing extent, in the country itself; in Tangiers it can be stretched still farther, in fact the breaking point can hardly be reached.

The general atmosphere of Tangiers is that of amused tolerance for all these strange happenings—the sun shines, the air is soft and balmy, life is easy and pleasant, embroidered with many amusements, so why worry! Even should an Italian kill a Portuguese, the complications of Italian and Portuguese law would take so long to unravel that nothing would happen. There is always roulette, pig-sticking, picnics and abund-

ance of gossip, and a never-ending stream of new visitors passing through to distract one's attention.

After I had been in the town for some time I came to the conclusion that I should *love* to live there, because the climate is incomparable, and it is impossible to be bored.

In addition to all this it is the easiest place to get to. The direct overland route from Paris, through Spain, is perhaps the quickest, though there is an excellent bi-weekly service from Marseilles, while all the big liners stop at Gibraltar on their way to the East, and from Gibraltar it is only an hour's journey across.

Then Tangiers is the terminus of the celebrated Tanger-Fez Railway, which opens up the whole of Morocco. We went up from Rabat by rail, the journey taking about nine hours. One travels by the Moroccan railway as far as Petit Jean, where one joins the Tanger-Fez line, getting into a train which compared favourably with any of the well-known European expresses, and we saw it under trying conditions, the line having been recently cut in two places by inundations. The country through which the railway runs is flat and uninteresting for the most part. One passes into the Spanish zone at Ksar el Kbir, where there are many troops, and minute attention is paid to passports and customs. It is most unnecessary fuss, as one passes again out of the

Spanish zone without leaving the train, shortly after leaving Arzilla. It is at this village that the railway line touches the coast and runs along for some time by the Atlantic. From one's comfortable armchair in the saloon coaches, one has magnificent views of the sun setting in the sea. The main day-train from Fez to Tangiers, which we joined at the junction, reaches Tangiers at night, and one's first view of the town is a pyramid of twinkling lights across the bay, the railway terminus being a considerable distance from the town itself.

This, though rather a nuisance, is much better than the usual arrival by boat, which is a hazardous proceeding. There is at present no pier or accommodation for ships to land their passengers in the usual fashion, though a new quay is now being constructed: in the meantime if one arrives by sea one lands by means of small boats—and the Bay of Tangiers is not very kind to small boats as a rule! There are plenty of cars at the railway terminus, however, to take one into the town itself, and very shortly the station will be brought nearer. This would have happened long ago had not those who owned land round about reluctantly refused to sell, except at a prohibitive price. In consequence, nothing was done, and the owners remained sitting on their land while the Tanger-Fez Company bought another tract of land for their great terminus

which, together with a large new hotel, is expected to be opened next year.

Tangiers is perched upon a hill, one horn of the crescent formed by its own bay, the other horn being Point Ciris. So the streets of the town run up and down on every level, twisting and turning, narrow and tortuous, and there can hardly be fifty yards of level ground, except along the sea front, in the whole town. The ancient Kasbah, or palace fortress, commands the highest point, overlooking the sea and bay; and no wheeled traffic is permitted in the old town which surrounds it. We had special permission from His Excellency The Mendoub (as the Sultan's representative in Tangiers is called) to visit this old palace, and he sent the chief of his Mokhaznis to accompany us and explain it all to us.

From the door of the Continental Hotel one mounts a winding street made of long, shallow steps of uneven cobbles, till one reaches the large fort, from which the finest view over the Straits of Gibraltar is obtainable. This is the true drop scene—shining, peacock-coloured water, a few white yachts on its surface, with the Rock of Gibraltar, the mountains of Spain, and the brilliant blue of the sky as a background. One looks at this through Moorish arches, through the avenues of the palms which grow so profusely in Tangiers, through a frame made by the high houses and narrow streets. This, indeed, is the

unchangeable background of the musical comedy of Tangiers. From the court of the Kasbah it is so beautiful as to appear almost unreal! One side of the court is occupied by the old Court of Justice, now the cook-house for the hospital which occupies the whole of one side of the palace yard, formerly a barracks, while the other side is taken up by the palace buildings and the state prison. To me it is sad to see these stately old Moorish palaces allowed to fall into ruins, their vast halls and decorations deserted and neglected. The palace here, especially, has remained empty for long; for many years the Sultans have avoided Tangiers, as they feel themselves not truly masters in this outlaw among towns. The halls surrounding the great court are now given over to the native carpet industry, started by the French for the orphans and destitute among the native population. This industry, which originally began with one hall, now occupies the whole court, and bids fair to rival those Arts Indigènes at Rabât. The royal kitchens were still more pathetic, for the walls and roof had fallen in and the great ovens had crumbled into ruin. The one part still intact is the Sultan's audience chamber, now occasionally used by His Excellency The Mendoub for the same purpose. The approach to this audience chamber is by an exquisite little court, well protected in olden days by tiny guardrooms on either side of the door.



A TOWN MARKET

In the little court are rose trees and a tiny fountain, one wall being covered with the usual curtain of purple bougainvillæa. In such an ante-chamber of perfume and repose those who craved audience with the Sultan might well have been content to await the pleasure of their lord. A narrow lane leads from the prison walls to the farther entrance to the Kasbah, a military dépôt of great importance, in which troops of native soldiers are trained at different periods by French and Spanish officers. This lane eventually brings one to the Plateau, a large open square with trees surrounding the green, and well-built houses belonging to rich traders and Jews, this being one of the favourite residential parts of the town for Europeans. Descending again to the town one comes directly to the Grand Soukko, an open market on a hillside, right in the centre of the town and one of the most amusing markets we saw in the whole country. There are no shops here, you walk up and down, in and out of avenues of people squatting on the ground, surrounded by their wares. There is no vestige of shade to be found, so it has long been the custom of the Tangiers women to cram a large, umbrella-shaped hat turned up at the edges, on the top of their Haiks. This hat, just exactly like a large basket turned upside down, is further decorated with pompoms and bright-coloured strings tying up these edges, and is worn equally by town natives

and those who come in from the country. The latter protect their legs on the long march from their towns and hill villages, by leather gaiters worn over the bare leg, some of these gaiters being embroidered in wool and some in leather.

The housewife in Tangiers has no easy time when buying her provisions in the Grand Soukko. Be she Arab or Infidel, she must first change her Moorish, Spanish, French, or English money—all of which are in currency in Tangiers—into the money of the market, a mysterious silver coinage which is useless in any other parts of the town. The tables of innumerable moneylenders decorate the sides of the market, and further complicate matters for those who wish to buy, for the moneylenders descend upon you like the wolf on the fold, fleece you of your own money, and give you handfuls of these unknown silver coins in exchange. As no visitor knows the value of these silver coins or realises at first that it cannot be used in the town, he generally accepts willingly a couple of handfuls, but he soon discovers that he must change it all again before he leaves the market, and needless to relate, he changes it at a great loss. The moneylenders see to it, through their formidable ring, that you do not enter until you have changed some money, so there is no getting away from this. However, it is well worth it, for a more beautiful market I have never seen. The flowers in particular,

brought in from the country mainly for the benefit of visitors, are alone well worth paying to see. There are baskets and baskets of vivid blue iris, that same iris which we grow with such care and attention at home, but which covers the Bled around Tangiers, and is brought in great armfuls to the market as are mimosa, jonquils, roses, carnations, and baskets full of flowering shrubs. The native Souk, as known in other parts of Morocco, is here practically non-existent, everything being sold in this open market or in the street.

The most important street of Tangiers is that which runs from the Grand Soukko to the Little Soukko, and so down to the port. It descends a steep hill, and no wheeled traffic is allowed in it. This is scarcely surprising as if one stood in the middle of the street and stretched out both arms one could touch the houses on either side. In this street are the various banks, a British post office, a Roman Catholic Church, a mosque, and innumerable small shops, where a constant flow of visitors crowd, fondly believing they are acquiring Moroccan curiosities, whereas they are merely patronising the trade of their own country. Sometimes, however, sitting at one of the cafés of the Little Soukko, where the whole talk and gossip of the town centres, one may see a sailor holding in his hand some really valuable curio. No one asks where this came from and how the

sailor acquired it or its history. If one likes it one buys it at once and takes it home quickly—it has probably come from Gibraltar, that strange harbour of odds and ends, where there is nothing that cannot be bought in the little dark streets if only you give the shopkeeper time to steal it for you!

The Little Soukko is full of cafés with little chairs set round tables in the open or inside 'dim interiors, from which dark bronze faces gaze out at you. Sailors with gold rings in their ears, Arabs, negroes, and Jews meet here, the whole sea-wrack of the Mediterranean washed up by chance and left behind by the tide.

One has only to sit down and sip a cup of coffee to hear the whole gossip of the town singing in one's ears. And here we heard, amongst other things, the story of the fountain, an amusing incident of life in Tangiers.

There was an untidy spring of water outside the gate of the English Consulate, which had been from time immemorial considered by the Arabs to have some sacred attribute. It was decided, in order to tidy the place up, to enclose this spring in a fountain or well-head, and the Moors agreed to this on the condition that it should always be considered a sacred well. One day after the carved well-head had been placed in position a European was discovered by a Moor, actually washing his motor-car with the sacred

water. The Moor protested in horror, but the chauffeur went on quietly sousing the filthy car; at last, in desperation, the native sought his cousin who was lodge-keeper at the British Consulate and appealed to him to stop the chauffeur polluting sacred water. All arguments proved useless, and the threat of the law only evoked the same answer—"I am an Italian, your laws do not apply to me." More natives gathered, and finally a deputation waited on the British Consul, imploring him to protect their sacred well. It is such incidents as this that infuriate the native, and the British minister telephoned to the Italian Consul, telling him the circumstances, and begging him to send up and remove the offender before grave trouble ensued. In response soldiers were immediately sent up from the Italian Consulate to bring their compatriot to order. When they arrived he had just finished washing and polishing the car, and laughed at them when they attempted to arrest him. "You cannot touch me," he said, "I am not Italian. I only said I was in order to be left undisturbed until I had finished my work!"

Once more I hear the chorus in the distance when I think of the Italians! For the military power of this nation in Tangiers is represented by eight Carabinieri, who run through the streets at stated intervals. Smiles cross every face as they pass, except the Moors, who are in

an ecstasy of delight to think their town of sufficient importance to have such magnificent creatures running about loose in it. No one knows why the Italians imported the eight Carabinieri, or what purpose they serve, but they certainly add greatly to the decoration of the town. When I saw them running in the usual line down the street they reminded me more than ever of the theatre, of those little bands of soldiers who represent an army, passing across the stage, running quickly round the back and appearing again.

The British Consulate lies in a beautiful garden at the top of one of the hills, just behind the English church and cemetery. It is a strange thing that wherever there is an English cemetery in a foreign country some fragment of the beauty which surrounds all English country churches seems to grow up with the trees that are planted there, and to invest God's Acre with a charm that reminds one immediately of home.

The Sultan's representative in Tangiers, His Excellency The Mendoub, has his own house close to the Continental Hotel, but conducts all the affairs of state at the house which was once the German Legation in the centre of the town: it is one of the few houses which have a beautiful garden, which one may see from the outside, it not being enclosed in high walls. The

style of the building is modern Moroccan, well adapted to the climate of the country. Here sits the legislative council, or Statute, which administers the laws of Tangiers, and here we were presented to His Excellency, to whom we were obliged to talk, as usual through an interpreter. This man spoke the best French we heard from any native in Morocco. His accent was so good that but for his flowing robes it would have been difficult not to believe him a Frenchman. His Excellency expressed his pleasure at receiving us, and himself suggested various expeditions for our amusement, placing his Chief Mokhaznis at our disposal. He was very desirous that we should see the many advances Tangiers had made under the existing régime, and was glad to hear a visit had been arranged for us to see the excellent schools organised by the French in this town. These include five primary schools, two professional schools, three Mohammedan schools, and two lycées, the Lycée Regnault for boys and the Lycée St. Aulaire for the girls. We paid a long visit to all of these schools, and were entertained by the heads of each. They interested me enormously, they are so well arranged, and embrace every form of education for the young. Each group has many Mohammedans amongst them who share the same benefits as the other scholars and who gain greatly in thus becoming acquainted

in their youth with Europeans. There are indeed, unique advantages in the educational line in Tangiers. Children who receive their schooling at these French lycées, not only have magnificent teaching, but the possibility of learning in their earliest years, various languages from their little playmates. In the words of Madame Buzenet, the Directress of the Lycée St. Aulaire: "These schools make it possible for French residents in Tangiers to give their children the same education that they would receive in France, and to prepare them for any career they choose. In addition, children of all other nationalities can receive an excellent classical and modern education in French, while the natives and the Moroccan Jews are given every facility for an education which will not only enable them to gain their living, but will develop their intellectual capacity to its highest possibility."

Any native child who shows unusual promise is encouraged to continue its studies in the higher Lycée after it has finished its course on one of the preparatory Mussulman schools. The great point about this system of education is the respect shown to all creeds, no matter what they may be. In the primary schools no fees are demanded, and all are treated on the same level, no preference being shown to any nationality. It is by institutions such as these that the confidence of the Mussulman is gained, and

the next generation—many of whom will have been educated in these schools—will be the bridge which will unite Mohammedan and Christian understanding.

The most charming suburb of Tangiers is what is called La Montana—the mountain—as everyone calls it. Here are the finest villas, almost hidden in their large semi-tropical gardens, and some of the most interesting people live on this mountain. Among these is the Ex-Sultan, Abdul Aziz, whom I had imagined as an old, old man, so many stirring events have happened in his day, but I found that he was barely fifty years of age, although he lives now almost as a recluse, and never sees strangers. He has an unpretentious house, low, white, rambling old place, surrounded by his park and garden, with a beautiful view across the Straits. He has given up all political and general interest in the world, and occupies his time almost entirely with his garden, felling trees and taking the greatest interest in varieties of flowers and plants which are sent to him from all over the world. He has long since given up his passion for clocks and mechanical toys, and until lately entertained any of his old English friends in Tangiers, and even played an occasional game of golf with them on his private course, but of late years he has aged considerably, and has become neurotic and

melancholy, and I was told he received less and less, never coming down to the town, and scarcely leaving his estate.

Just above his house is the famous Perdicaris Villa, with its wonderful woods and orange gardens. It now belongs to El Glaoui, one of the great chieftain's many homes. He comes very seldom, not a week during the whole year, but his house is kept in constant readiness for the master, who may send word of his arrival at any moment. The villa is small, lying almost on the top of the mountain, and contains only two storeys, which are arranged in a few large lounge halls, with carpets and divans, wonderful hangings and many cushions; huge terraces in front of the house are almost rooms in themselves, and again the view across the Straits is of incomparable beauty. The grounds of this villa are immense, and one can wander about in what seem the depths of a real forest, coming every now and then to a clearing where flower-beds are planted under the trees—a water garden has been made—or terraces, and carved stone staircases lead suddenly to a hidden arbour. The villa belonged to the Greek family of Perdicaris, the head of whom was carried off by the brigand Raisuli, and eventually ransomed for an enormous sum of money. Perdicaris, though a Greek, was an American subject, and it was in his house that the English girl who married the Charif of Wazan

first met her future husband. She was companion to Mrs. Perdiccaris when the Charif saw her and fell deeply in love with her, so deeply indeed that he dismissed his former wives when he married her, and actually allowed her to remain a Christian. It is also related that he accompanied her to the English service at the British Legation—there was no English church in Tangiers then—and that he used to watch the service through field glasses from the gallery!

The aged Charifa is still alive, and spends her time between her own house in Tangiers and her eldest son's house in Wazan. It was her granddaughter whom we visited in Rabat, and we were told that her sons and her grandchildren adored her, coming constantly to stay with her, and always asking her advice on all family affairs. She is now over seventy-six years of age, and occupies the position of head woman in the household of the Charifial family, the direct and lineal descendants of the Prophet. Was ever stranger fate for an English girl?

Many other interesting folk have come here to Tangiers, which seems to have been the only safe place in Morocco in which to keep one's head on one's shoulders during the last twenty-five years, and where, having weathered the storms, they are now content to settle down and enjoy the calm.

One of these is El Menebhi, whose story is indeed a tale out of the Arabian Nights. He was

carpet and mattress inspector in the royal palace of Moulai Hassan when Ba Ahmed was Grand Vizier, and this man, with his keen eye for a promising young protégé, noticed him at once and gave him a position in his own household. El Menebhi was tall, good-looking, and ambitious. He made himself so indispensable to Ba Ahmed that he gradually rose in position till he was Chief of the Mokhaznis, and had gained his master's complete confidence. He was the trusted servant who always took the private messages from the Grand Vizier to the young Sultan, Abdul Aziz. The astute young Mokhaznis, knowing the Grand Vizier to be old and ailing, prepared for coming events by insinuating himself by every means in his power, into the Sultan's good graces. He it was who informed Abdul Aziz of Ba Ahmed's fatal illness, and it was he, if rumour tells truly, who was secretly instructed by the Sultan to seize his master's goods and treasures when the Grand Vizier died. He claimed them in the name of the Sultan, and, hurrying caravans full of loot and jewels, bore away Ba Ahmed's goods from his palace in Marrakesh to enrich the Sultan's personal coffers, almost before his body was cold. However much truth there is in all this, it is a fact that very soon after Ba Ahmed's death El Menebhi was raised to the rank of Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief of the Sultan's armies. In a

short time he had stepped into his master's shoes, and was confidential adviser and favourite companion of the Sultan. He made it his business, clever young man that he was, to provide the Sultan with nothing but pleasure and amusement, and kept all worry and annoyance out of Abdul Aziz' path as far as he could. But even his youthful energy could not stem the events which were coming so rapidly to a head in Morocco.

Certain French activities in Algeria filled the kingdom with apprehension, and two special missions were fitted out, one to France and one to England, the latter being under the leadership of El Menebhi. He had an astonishing success in London, where he was received and knighted by the Queen. In the name of his master he spent money like water, entertaining all the special personages who he thought might further the success of his mission. He overstepped himself, in fact, for he was sufficiently successful to become dangerous, and a strong cabal at the Moroccan court was begun against him. Naturally he had left many enemies there, for one does not rise suddenly to such dizzy heights without making foes on the way. Abdul Aziz himself, while pleased at the success of the mission, was by no means delighted with the signal honours shown to its head, and he lent ear to those of his court who assured him that El

Menebhi was furthering his own ends in England rather than attending to his master's business. The intrigue grew apace, and it was decided that he should be received on his return with the welcoming honours of the Moroccan court on the British ship that was escorting him back to the country, but that directly he landed on African earth he should be thrown into chains and imprisoned. The astute El Menebhi, however, knew his countrymen, knew his Sultan's court, and had left a good secret service of his own behind him; many ambitious young men, who had risen with him, whose fortunes fell or rose with his, had *remained in the Sultan's entourage in Marrakesh*, and, as a matter of fact, the whole plot was made known to him before he reached Mazagan, the port at which he was to disembark. He made his plans accordingly, and while the official deputation was arriving at one side of the ship to bring him the royal welcome, he disembarked secretly from the other, was rowed quickly ashore, where swift horses were waiting for him, and he rode "hell for leather" to Marrakesh. Here he told his story to the Sultan himself before his enemies could forestall him. He was aided by the British Legation there, who assured the Sultan that he could not possibly misjudge a man whom the Queen of England had so lately honoured.

But El Menebhi had risen too quickly, and the palace intrigues against him were too strong. He

had forgotten also the Moorish proverb—"Never leave a successful post"—and during his absence his enemies had poisoned the Sultan's mind so thoroughly that, although he regained his position, Abdul Aziz never completely trusted him again. The palace intrigues against him were endless, and being unable to bring about his fall by one way, others were sought, until at last one succeeded. It was suggested that as Commander-in-Chief he had never led a successful army to victory. One of the usual rebellions was raging, and he was suddenly ordered to lead the attack against the rebel chief Bouhamara. The erst-while carpet inspector knew nothing of military tactics, and his attack failed signally; on his return the Sultan permitted him to make a pilgrimage to Mecca—the polite form of dismissal for anyone who could not be openly murdered.

After Mecca—Tangiers—for El Menebhi knew well that it would cost him his head to venture near the court again. He used to come down occasionally to play at the Casino, and he always entertained any of the English personages whom he had met in London, but he had not had much time to acquire a vast fortune, and he was compelled of late to live more and more quietly. Morocco is full of such stories as this, though they chiefly end more disastrously in murder and sudden death. It is nothing there for a carpet-maker to become the Sultan's chief adviser, for

a handsome young lad, a slave's son, to attain the position of Grand Vizier. Even the Sultans have negro blood in their veins, and fortune's wheel in Africa turns as quickly as the wilderness turns to a garden under happy circumstances, or a vast garden goes back to the desert if neglected for the shortest space.

Tangiers being practically a Republic, holds a unique position in Morocco. It is the refuge of all those who are accounted a danger to the country, and is one of the very few places where people talk quite freely and openly about conditions, wars, intrigues, and the various personalities of the country.

We heard many amusing stories of the consternation and muddle in Rabat which had occurred when the late Sultan died and his young son, who had been kept a prisoner, was chosen to succeed him. The whole court was turned topsy-turvy, of course, for the royal circle was re-shuffled like a pack of cards! On the question being asked as to how the elder brothers accepted the fact that they were passed over completely: "Did they not make a fight for their inheritance?"—we were told, "They could not, they had no party, and the Koran only dictates obedience to the reigning sovereign."

In olden days there was almost always fighting and war after the death of a Sultan, for the country is full of pretenders and possible heirs;

all the Sultan's sons had an equal chance of succession, and it may be understood that a strong hand was needed to control such a country. I asked what became of the old sultan's harem, the innumerable ramifications of families, relations of the various wives who are all supported in the Residence, but no-one seemed to know or be interested. "The new Sultan looks after them, and they are provided for from the royal purse. Sooner or later they all disappear, for women and children are of small account in this country, and for them the rise and fall from fortune and power hangs on the wheel of destiny in this most precarious land!"

Much of the gossip in Tangiers when I was there was concerned with the Grand Vizier of the late Sultan, he who had persuaded his master to imprison his youngest son, and who had intrigued so violently against the French Protectorate. This Grand Vizier, then awaiting his trial in Rabat, had persuaded Moulai Youssef to permit him to do all the royal business in his own name: "If property is bought in your name it will eventually come into the possession of the Protectorate; if it is bought in mine it remains private property and I can deliver it to you or your heirs whenever you wish." So for a considerable time the Grand Vizier bought and sold for the Sultan, and controlled his private fortune: in fact, all the royal business for years before the

Sultan's death, was carried on in the name of the Grand Vizier. All documents, deeds, consignments of goods and property bore his signature, and were made out to him personally. When the Sultan died the Grand Vizier claimed all as a gift of his master, and very nearly a third of the royal revenues were thus diverted from their proper channels! The Grand Vizier was still in Rabat when we were there, not actually a prisoner, but not permitted to leave the town till the trial was over. We saw him many times, for his house had been sealed with all it contained, and he was staying, together with his eldest son, in the Hotel Trans-Atlantique, where a suite of apartments was reserved for him. Gossip in Tangiers was rife as to his chance of getting away with the loot. There were bets as to what amount he would be permitted to keep, some saying he would not get any of it, many wondering whether he would even retain his head. It was all quite openly discussed, and the general opinion held was that the French would not kill him but that eventually he, too, would probably make a pilgrimage to Mecca, and would then come and settle in Tangiers.

A visit to Tetouan necessitates a specially viséd Spanish passport, and it is well to provide oneself plentifully with pesetas, as no other money is of the slightest use there. We rose at dawn,

starting thus early to have a long day, for we had been told that Tetouan is well worth seeing. After the wonderful French roads in Morocco one soon realises that this is Spanish territory, for the road is a veritable switchback, little or no effort having been made to grade it except on the very steepest inclines, where it was absolutely a necessity. Soon after leaving Tangiers the route leads into wild and mountainous country, rocky and barren for the most part, but occasionally crossing moorland, which reminded me very much of Scotland. Here we met many caravans and groups of gipsies on mules and donkeys. These always occasioned a halt as the road was too narrow to pass, our car could not go off and the caravans usually refused to do so without a long argument. But here one is in a land where no-one hurries, Moor and Spaniard alike despising as undignified anyone who shows the faintest idea of speed.

Consequently, although we had started so early we did not arrive before mid-day, though we should easily have done the trip in three hours. Before reaching the town one sees its white walls rising on the farther side of the river on which all the merchandise of Tetouan arrives at the sea at Port Martine. I had thought that Tetouan was on the sea itself, but found it was really eleven kilometres away, though from the precipitous cliffs on which it stands one looks far out

over the ocean. The approach to the town is very imposing: one enters through the western gate, where a strong post of soldiers is stationed and where passports were rigorously examined. The modern town is completely Spanish, and has been built in and out of the old town, a very different arrangement from the French modern towns which are kept apart from the native quarters. In Tetouan the Spanish quarter centres itself mainly round the Place d'Espagne and the Rue de la Luneta in which stands the large new hotel, Alphonso the Thirteenth, where we were deposited for luncheon. Did I say luncheon? No one appeared to have heard of such a thing at the early hour of 12.30. "It is impossible to lunch before two o'clock; nobody does here and nothing is ready."

A very picturesque old Moor came to our rescue. He was tall and of commanding presence, and looked exactly like a patriarch out of the Bible. To our astonishment he told us he was a guide, "the only one in Tetouan" he said with pride. "This is my native town and I know it well: will you let me show it to you? There is nothing to be seen in the Spanish town," he went on, "it is just modern and ordinary, but I can show you many things here which you can see nowhere else in Morocco."

He was even better than his word for not only did he take us through all the native streets,

narrow and winding lanes which led up the steep hillside to the Kasbah—now occupied by Spanish and Moorish troops—but he pointed out and explained to us many unusual things which we certainly would otherwise never had noticed. The fact, for instance, that the lanes leading up from the main streets to the Kasbah were mostly arched over, had a special reason. "See," he said, "how wise and kind the Prophet was: although no-one but the Sultan himself may shade his head from the sun by an umbrella, he instructed us to build our streets with many arches which would shade and shelter us from sun and rain alike." He pointed out many carved windows, and the old arched Moorish doors of stone with an inscription from the Koran on their lintels. He took us into several courtyards where the tiling was as beautiful as any we had seen in Meknes or Marrakesh. The Souks here are all very distinct, each trade keeping exclusively to its own street. The leather workers, in particular, were most numerous and interesting. They have three Souks of their own in Tetouan, and are famous all over Morocco for they have invented their own decoration, and the leather, instead of being tooled as in other places, is here embroidered in a very strange fashion, seen nowhere else. This embroidery is worked with the narrowest strips of brightly-coloured leather, so fine as to be almost like skeins of

silk. It is not until one examines the work most closely that one realises that it is leather. Then there is a special Souk where the workers are entirely occupied with inlay on wood. Mother-of-pearl, ivory, ebony and brass are used separately or together for this inlay. It is from here that many of the most elaborate and beautiful marriage chests come, for this inlay trade is a speciality of Tetouan. Farther down the Souk of carpenters were other chests, painted in old Persian design in colours, so vivid and living that at first we thought it was enamel and not paint. During our walk through the native town the guide passed his own house, and with great deference asked us if we would like to see it as it had been in his family for many generations, and was one of the oldest in Tetouan. It was a tiny house of only two stories, but it had a tessellated courtyard with the rooms opening on to it from square wooden balconies—a Pasha's house in miniature!

His tiny, solemn-eyed daughter greeted us at the door of this Moorish doll's-house, making her salaam as though she had been a great lady. While we rested a cup of mint tea was precariously served to us by the baby daughter, and the old Moor showed us his wife's marriage chest, which was one of the most beautiful we had seen. He told us it had come down in her family for generations, and would, in its turn,

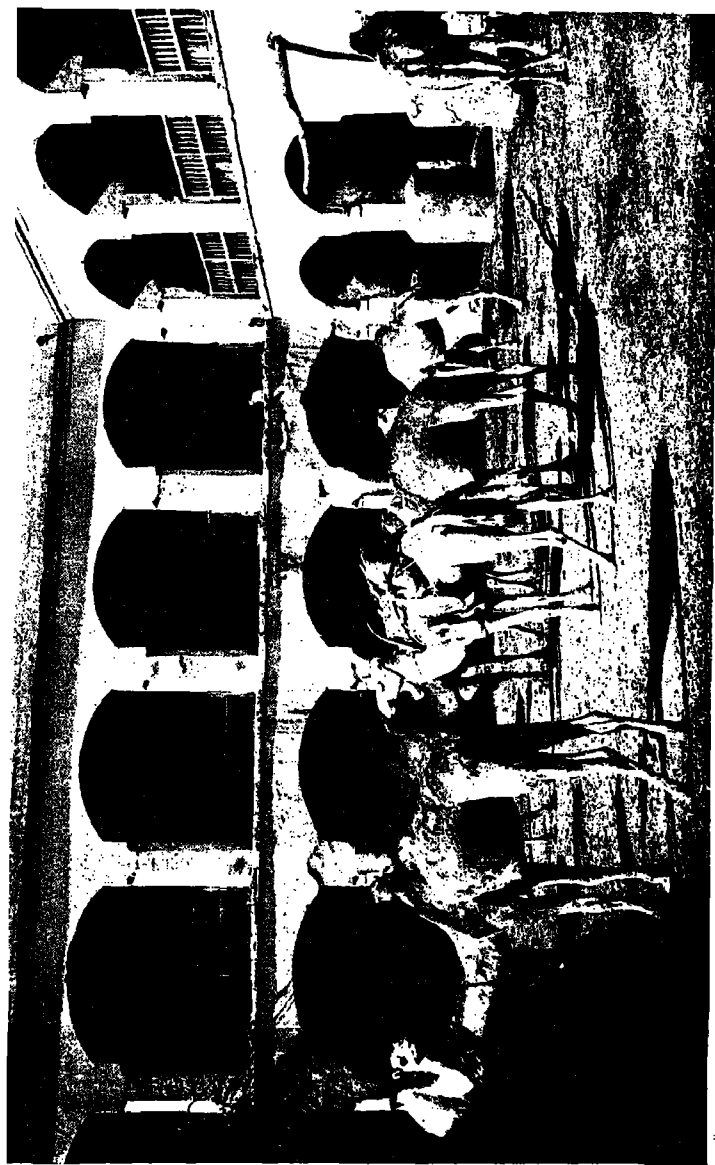
descend to their eldest daughter, the baby before us, whose marriage had already been practically arranged. "She will marry her cousin," he told us, "in ten years" (she was then six). "A marriage between cousins is well looked upon in our religion—the present descendants of the Prophet come from the marriage of his daughter, Fatima, with her cousin, Ali." We wondered so much what we could give the enchanting little creature who so gracefully welcomed us to her father's house, and at last found a tiny gilt pocket mirror which we asked him to allow her to accept. I shall never forget the child's genuine delight at this simple gift; she salaamed to the ground many times, and then, a sudden fit of shyness overcoming her, ran and buried her face in her father's burnous. It was a delightful interlude to the hot and dusty town.

After we had rested the old guide took us to the Moslem cemetery on the eastern side of the town, and again we saw the strange veiled figures sitting on their relations' graves, and as it was Friday, women were particularly numerous. A sudden thought struck the Moor. "Friday," he exclaimed, "you shall see the Sultan go to prayers. I will arrange it for you, there will be plenty of time for I do not eat in the middle of the day. While you are lunching I will obtain the necessary permission."

We went back to the hotel by way of the Souks connected with fodder and grain. These are some

of the largest in Tetouan for many caravans come here, bringing goods for shipment, and the animals have to be stabled and cared for until the caravan is reloaded for the return journey. Turning one corner we came upon the entrance to the horse fondouks, from which a great stamping and screaming proceeded. Looking through the great doorway we saw two stallions biting and kicking in their efforts to reach each other, while numerous Arabs struggled to keep them apart. I had never seen two horses fighting before, but the guide told us it frequently happened in Tetouan.

Passing through these Souks we were struck with the absence of foreigners. We seemed to be the only strangers there, and we asked the guide the reason of this. "People do not realise the beauty of the old town of Tetouan," he told us, "you never see artists sitting here painting old doorways as you do in Fez and Marrakesh, but it is one of the most picturesque towns in the country and certainly the most unspoilt." We asked him if he knew his country well and had lived in its other towns, and we found he had travelled much and knew Fez, Marrakesh, Rabat and Meknes—an unusual thing for a Moor. Later on we inquired about him, and found he was a very remarkable man, coming from an old Moorish family, one of those for whom fortune's wheel had indeed turned rapidly and serious reverses had overtaken them. With the philosophy of his



CAMEL FONDUCK

race he accepted the will of Allah. Instead of serving in palaces as his father had done, he now made his living by showing the beauties of his native town.

After an indifferent lunch, during which the personnel of the hotel appeared to be snatching their early breakfast, we started again under the guidance of our aged friend crossing the Place d'Espagne, which is not yet completed although it has been under construction for some three years, to a little road leading to the main mosque of the town. Tetouan has no less than seventeen mosques and many sanctuaries within its walls. The number of its inhabitants reach the total of twenty-five thousand—there being about thirteen thousand Mussulmans, five thousand Jews, and the rest Europeans, almost entirely Spanish. On our way to the mosque we asked what Sultan we were about to see, as the Sultan of Morocco was in Rabat. Our guide told us that the Sultan's representative in Tetouan was called "the Sultan of Spanish Morocco," and was considered to fill an especially important position in the Charifian Empire, as he represented Islam in the Spanish zone. This very important personage turned out to be a lad of only seventeen years of age. His palace was almost opposite the entrance to the mosque, and the street, when we arrived, was already lined with native soldiers, behind whom were standing most of the elderly notables of the place with their

ceremonial gauze burnous over their usual robes. Our guide had obtained for us a place on the steps to the door of the Council Chamber, from which issued—just before the arrival of the Sultan—the aged members of the Council itself. They fell in behind the Sultan's Mokhazni and followed them into the mosque. A native band preceded the Sultan's household, beginning to play as they passed out of the great doors of his palace yard; behind them came the personal bodyguard, in the midst of which walked the Sultan—an unimpressive, swarthy looking young man who walked with rather a slouching gait the few yards between his palace gates and the doors of the mosque. As he emerged the cry went up "*Allah ibarek f'amr Sidi!*"—"God bless the life of our lord!"—and the answer came immediately from the Sultan—"May the peace of Allah rest upon you all." It was all over in a few moments, and we had no time to wait to see the return, which is always made on horseback even though it be the very shortest distance.

Our guide, indeed, urged us to leave Tetouan in the early afternoon, as he told us there was always difficulty for foreigners to pass from the Spanish to the International zone after dusk. We were glad to have followed his advice, as we found a perfect queue of cars waiting on the outskirts of Tangiers for the inspection of their permits to re-enter the International zone. Two of the special

difficulties with which the French Protectorate have to contend in Morocco are the Spanish zone and the International zone, which is Tangiers. Spain was in Morocco before France, and it is a matter of the most vital importance to her that the coast of Africa opposite her shores should be in her own hands. The question of Tangiers is different: it is one of the strategic keys to the Mediterranean which commands the Straits of Gibraltar, and it is absolutely essential that it should remain International. But both Spain and France hanker after it—as a witty diplomatist remarked, “when Spain has reverses in the Riff country she demands Tangiers as a recompense—when she has a victory she demands it as a reward!”

The Moors themselves look on and the wise men shake their heads, remembering the words of the Prophet when he warned them against seeking the help of the Unbeliever—and Tangiers remains international.

We delayed our departure from Tangiers a day in order to accept the invitation of the Mendoub to have tea at his private house, almost next door to the hotel. He had invited a number of people to meet us, including his aide-de-camp, or special adviser, a young Frenchman appointed by the Protectorate. This gentleman is in constant attendance on His Excellency, and speaks Arabic fluently. A number of well-known French

people, resident in Tangiers, were there, and the conversation was entirely in French, except for the few moments when His Excellency came and sat next each guest, talking to them through his interpreter. The Mendoub's house was in the usual Moorish style except that, as it stood on a terrace overlooking the sea, the main reception hall had windows looking right over the bay.

The same long divans with plentiful cushions, the same velvet hangings, the same beautiful service of coloured glasses for the mint tea, glass engrained with gold and deeply cut. There were innumerable cakes and sweetmeats, and for the first time I saw in Morocco, cigarettes served to the ladies. The Mendoub himself took no refreshment except to taste the first glass of tea, it being the ancient custom here for the host to refrain from eating till his guests have all been served. One of the most interesting things in all this Moorish entertainment is to watch the way in which the high personages slip so easily out of their shoes at the shallow step before the entrance to the audience hall. The older men almost all wear stockings of fine white wool, and the footfall is soundless in consequence. They also wear small turbans of deftly folded silk muslin, over which they draw the hood of their burnous when they go out into the street. The dress of a Moorish gentleman consists of a shirt of the finest linen, usually embroidered, linen drawers and a

long robe, called a kaftan. This is generally in cloth in the cold weather, or in silk in the summer, and is embroidered in a very intricate pattern in silk round the collar and right down the front. It fastens by tiny buttons from the neck to the edge of the hem, and is always carefully buttoned from top to bottom. On great occasions these kaftans are of heavy brocade, embroidered with gold or silver, and over this is worn the burnous—a loose cloak-like garment with a hood attached, and having short, very loose sleeves which may be used or not, as the wearer likes. This garment is made of all kinds of material—fine wool, heavy face cloth, woolly blanket-like stuff, or of a material rather like bath towelling—and it may be in almost any colour, though the highly-bred Moors invariably wear white or cream-coloured burnous. If the weather is cold they put on one burnous over another, sometimes wearing as many as four, and for very ceremonious occasions a fine burnous of transparent silk gauze is put on over the rest.

It seems to be the custom never by any chance to wear the burnous straight. It is thrown over the head and slung on the shoulders like a sack, it being the *dernier cri* to wear it crookedly adjusted, with the sleeves flapping like the wings of a penguin! The unmarried man wears a fez of red cloth on his head, it not being considered correct for him to wear a turban till after his marriage.

The Moor shaves the entire head except for the one lock—the *goutayaia*—by which, it is hoped, the Prophet will eventually pull him into heaven; all the smallest lads have this lock, and even the hair of baby boys is cut in like fashion.

After tea was over and the glasses and cakes removed, a large tray was brought in with several high silver ornaments on it which looked like sugar sifters. We wondered what they could possibly be, but when a servant began to sprinkle us with their contents we realised they were scent sprays. Directly afterwards the head *Mokhaznis* himself appeared with a censer, from which arose clouds of perfumed incense, and we were again thoroughly scented. This is rather beautifully done, as a little slave, who accompanies the *Mokhaznis*, takes hold of the corner of the scarf, shawl, or cloak, lifts it delicately while the *Mokhaznis* swings his censer underneath. The slave holds open the coats of the men in the same way, and they are scented in like fashion. This brought the conversation round to scents and perfumes, and I asked His Excellency what perfumes were most liked in Morocco. Speaking through his interpreter he told us that the Moors are particularly fond of all perfumes, though, perhaps those eastern scents, such as sandal-wood, orris root, and amber are the favourites. There also were other very delicate flower scents—carnation, rose, orange-flower, verbena, musk,

jasmine, and, most loved of all, the elusive and delicate stock. Seeing we were greatly interested he offered the service of his Mokhaznis again to take us to the best scent-maker in Tangiers, and, as we were leaving the following morning, it was arranged that we should go at once after the tea-party.

Then occurred one of those strange anomalies which make one smile in Morocco to-day. There is no special perfume Souk in Tangiers as there is in Fez and Marrakesh, the scent merchant doing his business in his own house. It was then after five o'clock and His Excellency suggested that his interpreter should ring up the perfume seller on the telephone and be sure that he was still there, as it was so late in the afternoon. It was strange to see the grave and dignified interpreter in his oriental robes wrestling with telephone trouble, just as one does in the most modern cities of Europe. All Moors love the telephone, take it entirely as a matter of course, and are extremely annoyed when they do not get their number quickly! It is even more amusing to see the way in which they use electric light. Even the Arabs in the smaller towns, who come to it—not by way of candle, lamp, or gas—but direct from the most primitive lamp, a wick floating in oil, get quite angry and impatient if they have a fuse.

His Excellency apologised for the delay, explaining that the telephone was not good in Tangiers. He smiled, and seemed quite pleased when we

told him that there was the same trouble in Europe! However, the arrangements were made at last, and we took our leave of our kind host, who accompanied us to the door and made his farewells with many salaams, begging us to be sure to visit him when we came to Tangiers again, and thanking us in the dignified Moorish way for the honour we had done him in visiting his house. We went directly, accompanied by the Mokhaznis, to the house of the perfume seller, and that was one of the most interesting hours I spent during my whole stay in the country.

The perfume seller was an old, old man, with a very wrinkled face. He smiled at us with a humorous twinkle in his eye, saying that he knew ladies always loved perfumes, and as he himself spoke better French than the Mokhaznis we got on very well indeed. He lived in the queerest old house, with the very smallest courtyard I ever saw. His room, which was also his shop, gave on to this courtyard, and a verandah, covered with jasmine and roses, made the room seem even darker and smaller than it really was. All round it were wooden boxes, almost like pigeon-holes, full of bottles and paper packets. There were no seats, only cushions on the floor, and a huge bowl of flowers stood at one side of the old man's low wooden table. As we entered a young Moor was just leaving; he carried in his hand a tight little posy of flowers all bound very closely

together, long and narrow, in the shape of a small carrot. It swung from a tiny ribbon, and he carried it on the end of his finger very carefully. Had he not gone I do not know how we could possibly have got into the tiny room; as it was the Mokhaznis had to sit outside on the balcony. The old perfume seller called his servant, who brought us two leather cushions and placed them on either side of him, and down we sat on the floor, the three of us completely filling the little room.

The old man had the usual low, round, wooden table before him. It had a very thick top with what looked like ivory buttons round it. He pressed one suddenly, and a tiny drawer opened, showing a long glass phial within, and we saw that the table was full of little secret drawers in which the most precious scents were kept.

Oh, those scents! I shall never forget them! He made us try one after another, putting one drop on the backs of our hands, rubbing it and then asking us to guess what the perfume was. Every flower was represented. The pure, distilled essence, and the smallest drop was enough to perfume the whole courtyard.

When we found he could talk French we plied him with innumerable questions, and directly he saw that we were really interested he became interested himself, and in the usual polite Moorish fashion he told us all about his fascinating trade. He was a great herbalist as well as a perfumer, in

fact I think he was more interested in his herbs than his perfumes. All the little wooden boxes in his wall were filled with special herbs, gathered and dried under unique conditions.

There was thyme, picked under a waning moon; asphodel, gathered before dawn; orris and musk dried when the planet Mercury was at its zenith; agrimony, picked while Venus was an evening star; garlic taken from the ground while she was a morning star. He told us that clover, cut and dried during the month of Ramadan, had most special virtues, and that the roots of certain herbs gathered during the time of the new moon, dried in the mid-day sun and powdered at dusk on the same day were a sovereign remedy for melancholia. There was no end to the strange things he told us. Charms, potions, special doses for mental as well as physical ailments—in fact he could cure anything! Immediately we asked him about love charms—"yes, he had several, but what sort of love charm did we want? Something to bring back an erring husband? Something to retain a straying lover? Something to enhance a love already begun? Something, perhaps to make our children obedient, or merely something to sweeten friendship?" We decided on the latter and he said, "I have just made such a one—the young man who left me as you arrived took it with him—I will make one for each of you. Only you must tell me, is the friend a man or a woman?" We

watched him prepare these charms with the greatest interest. He took two sticks of wood something like orange sticks, and laid them on the table before him together with some long threads of green silk. He took from his bowl of flowers a small rosebud, fixing it on the end of the orange stick and perfumed it with one drop from one of his secret phials. He arranged round it a little ring of mimosa blossom and then some small leaves of orange flower. Next came a ring of blue forget-me-nots, very broad this, measuring almost an inch, and then another inch of pale pink night-scented stock. He finished it off at the bottom with soft green moss, leaving a long loop of silk at the end, and laid it aside for a moment while he made the second. This was fashioned almost the same way, except that the leaves stripped from a clove carnation and tiny, star-like jasmine flowers replaced the forget-me-nots and the stock in the first. The second one was secured to the wooden stick with rose-coloured silk, and when they were finished we realised that the posy the man had been carrying away, whom we met on our arrival, was one of the same charms. The old perfume seller said, "you must wait for five minutes while they dry, and in the meantime I will give you"—pointing to my young friend—"a recipe for something which will take your freckles away. Do not be afraid of it. It may not sound very convenable, but I assure you it is efficacious. You must take the ground powder

of mimosa flowers, the liver of a still-born kid and the entrails of a porcupine. Dry them for one hour in the sun, pound them together in a mortar and soften them with orange flower water. Use this on your face each night for a week and you will have no freckles. Will you use it?" "If you can tell me where I can procure the entrails of a porcupine I will attempt to make it and will certainly use it." The old man shook his head. "I am a perfume seller," he said, "but I think any butcher will procure for you the entrails of a porcupine. Will the other lady have a recipe?" The other lady decided she would like a recipe, and he gave me one to make the eyes bright. It was not so difficult as that for removing freckles, but as I was never able to procure one of the ingredients I never had it made up. The juice of foxglove stalks to the extent of four grammes was to be mixed with honey, aconite and the whiskers of a white cat, which he assured me would dissolve in this concoction! It was to be used only every third night, beginning on the first of the month—"and if you use it regularly, you will conform to the Moorish idea of beauty in a very short time." When we asked what this idea was he gave it us as a poetical translation of the Arab saying—"Belle comme la lune dans sa quatorzième nuit"—"as beautiful as the moon in her fourteenth night."

CHAPTER NINE

Fez—Legend of Name—the Mellah—History of Fez—The Mosques
—The Shrine of Moulai Idriss—The Medersas—The Students'
Festival.

ON our return journey from Tangiers to Fez the country was familiar until we reached Petit Jean, but immediately after leaving this junction we came into the mountainous country that lies between Petit Jean and Meknes, where the railway runs along the gorge of Bab Tisra by the side of a swift flowing river—the Rdom—the fertiliser of this exceedingly beautiful valley. After passing Ainkerma (the station for Moulai Idriss), the track gradually rises, and winds in and out among olive groves and orchards, describing wide sweeps round old ruined flats and isolated blocks of the walls begun by Moulai Ismail.

After Meknes one is on the direct road for Fez, there being no station of any importance between the two.

It is amazing to approach this ancient city by the modern means of a railway; with the wisdom of the ages Fez conceals herself completely from the casual visitor. Even when one has arrived

at the station one remains entirely ignorant of any town at all. This, of course, sounds nonsense, but it is, nevertheless, a fact. One descends at the large terminus apparently in the middle of the Bled, the only sign of immediate life in the neighbourhood being the football fields. My heart sank when I saw them there, for Fez had been my great dream ever since I arrived in Morocco, and I had not imagined football fields within five hundred miles! We got into a car and started an apparently interminable ride, on and on through avenues of trees and seemingly blank walls. Through a broken arch in one of these we at last caught a glimpse of a pile of untidy Moorish houses.

"Is this Fez?" I asked the driver without enthusiasm.

"Fez Nouvelle—fourteenth century," he answered.

"Ah, the modern town," we said.

"Not at all," he answered snappishly. "You passed the outskirts of the modern town long ago. This is the Mellah—the Jewish quarter—which was built in the fourteenth century. Fez itself is much farther on!"

At this we lost interest, and resigned ourselves to what promised to be an inevitable disappointment awaiting us at the end of this drive. The road grew dustier and dustier, the walls more and more in need of repair. At last we squeezed through a very dilapidated little gate.

"This is Fez," he said triumphantly as we turned into a narrow, dusty lane on either side. Blinded with dust and tired to death I closed my eyes and felt that if this was Fez I was sorry we had troubled to come!

Even the comfortable rooms which were awaiting us in the Trans-Atlantic Hotel, failed to cheer me for the moment.

I suppose I must have been very tired, for after a hot bath and an excellent dinner I felt better. But it seemed too late to go out then, and somehow I felt so disappointed with our arrival that I did not care to make the effort that evening.

A very old friend who was staying in the hotel refreshed my enthusiasm; he had been three months in Fez, and was more and more delighted with it. "But what has happened to you?" he asked. "When I saw you in Marrakesh you were looking forward to Fez with the greatest enthusiasm—you were wild to get here. Now you seem disillusioned, even before you have seen it." I murmured something about the hateful dust, the dingy entrance, the high broken walls. "Oh, but that is nothing," he answered, "nothing at all. I know an old secret staircase that leads on to the roof of this house. Come up and see Fez in the moonlight." We mounted the narrow stairs, almost reluctantly—how often since then have I remembered that first night and my reluctance to go up—but not one single evening of my stay

passed without our ascending to that roof to watch Fez spread out before us in the starlight!

The stairs were narrow and dark, the last flight little more than a ladder; we climbed through a trapdoor on to the roof itself and came out into a silver world.

A fleet of flat, white roofs floated in the darkness, the moonlight tracing their balustrades and turrets with light. Every here and there a dark minaret stood up like a sentinel, or a tall, feathery cypress swept up into the sky. The dark cracks between the roofs were streets, we knew; narrow, deep streets between the houses, but they looked like channels of water between rafts. The waving crests of the trees were the only moving things, their shadows in the moonlight moving like waves overlapping from the cracks. I have never before seen such an illusion of water where no water was; the sacred city lay as if entranced before us. Each night we went up, after that first time, eager to trace where we had been, what houses we had seen during the day, but always, as on this first night, we were dumb and silent in the face of such magic beauty. . . . No, Fez in the moonlight, seen from a roof-garden, is indescribable!

The legend of the city's name is well-known, and makes a charming story. It was founded by Moulai Idriss II, the son of the saint and pro-

tector of Islam, Moulai Idriss I, whose tomb is in the centre of the sacred town which bears his name. His son, it is said, felt overshadowed by his father's great reputation and saintliness. He found there was no room for a second man of the same name in that place and he determined to found a city of his own. In his wanderings he found an ideal site, a fertile, sheltered valley between two mountains, and here he decided to lay the foundations of his city.

When a pious Moor begins anything, even the most simple task, he does it to the Glory of God, and Moulai Idriss addressed the following invocation as he commenced to trace the plans of the walls:

"Grant, O my God, that this place may be the abode of science and of wisdom, that Thy book may be honoured therein and the laws observed. Grant that its people may remain faithful to the Law and the prayer as long as the city I am about to build shall exist."

Before he had gone far he was stopped by an ancient patriarch who was so old that no-one remembered when he was born. "The peace of Allah be with you, my son!" he said. "What are you doing here between these mountains?"

"And upon you, my father, peace," answered the Sultan. "I wish to build a city where I may dwell and my sons after me; where the most

high God shall be worshipped, where the Koran shall be read and where the Prophet's law shall be followed."

"Now Allah be praised," said the old man, "for certainly you are the man of whom it is written that he should come to this spot. Let me relate to you the prophecy. It was told to me by an aged hermit who lived here before me and who died a hundred years ago. He had found, in some ancient writings, the history of the town which lay here in this very valley. Its name was Sef, and it was destroyed seventeen hundred years ago. But it was foretold in the writing that it should be raised up again on the same spot by a man who was a descendant of the great Prophet. It was said of him, that he should be a mighty and powerful lord, that his city should be rich and beautiful, where the learned might study, the poor live in peace, and the glory of God be enshrined as long as time should last."

"Now Allah be praised," cried Moulai Idriss, "for I am that very man," and he continued to trace out the foundations. When he had completed the plan he meditated for a long time, considering by what name he should call his capital. "It should bear the same name as the ancient town which existed here so many years ago," he thought, "yet to celebrate the fact that since its destruction the splendour of Islam has enriched the earth, I will change the name. The ancient city was

called Sef—I will reverse the letters and call my new town Fes.”

All that was prophesied of Fez seems to have come true. Her colleges have been famous, not only throughout Morocco, but throughout the whole world of Islam, and she has been the chief jewel in the crown of that faith. Indeed, no other city has been so fanatical in religious feelings, and even to-day it is impossible to remain for even a short while in Fez without remarking how completely religion dominates not only the city but the people who dwell there. For a very long time Jews and Christians were scarcely permitted to pass through the streets. The Jewish population was rigorously shut up in the Mellah, and only permitted to come out at stated hours, while many people are still living who remember the horror with which Christians were regarded in the town. Even when ambassadors from European courts were carried through the streets in closed litters, devout Moors turned their heads away and spat in hatred of the infidel as they passed.

We ourselves were told that we should find more unfriendliness to foreigners in Fez than anywhere else in Morocco, but on the contrary we were most politely received there by those Moorish notables to whom we had introductions, and many facilities were given us by Sidi Bauchta el Baghadi—the

Pasha of Fez—to see the wonders and treasures of the town.

All my disappointment faded away from the very moment I gazed upon Fez in the moonlight! It was even more wonderful than I had imagined. It is not until you are really inside the town that its subtle glamour enfolds you, and you realise the charm of this old city. Fez will hold you a prisoner and a willing prisoner at that, inside the encircling walls with which Moulai Idriss enclosed her.

There are really three towns. Hence the traveller's bewilderment on arrival. The new modern town, built in 1912 by the French, stands a long way off from the original city, which cannot even be seen by the people living in the new town, as it sweeps down the side of the chosen valley. Between these two towns lies the Mellah—the Jewish quarter—which is a town by itself, and has been called, for generations, Fez Nouvelle. It was built in the fourteenth century to accommodate the Jews who had grown so numerous that they overflowed from the original Mellah in the old city, and where they were so loathed that it was decided to build them a town outside the walls. Since then the Jews have lived in Fez Nouvelle, but even here Moslem hatred followed them and they have often been raided, any general rejoicing or fête being made an occasion to sack the Jewish quarter. The laws drawn up regulating their lives

were stricter than those for the slaves. A certain costume is prescribed for them, and they are allowed to wear no other; they must walk in the gutters of the streets and take off their shoes when they pass a mosque; they pay extra taxes which, in olden days, could be increased at almost any time. If a Jew is seen riding a horse or a mule, any street urchin is allowed to kick him off and take possession of the animal; they are only allowed to ride donkeys, and even these not in the streets of the town. The gates of their quarter are locked at night and no-one is allowed either to come in or go out. In the country, and particularly in the coast towns, most of these severe regulations have been relaxed, though they still obtain to a large extent. As late as 1912, when the last of the great uprisings took place, the Ville Nouvelle was so severely attacked that many Jews threw themselves from the town walls rather than face their assailants.

There are three Trans-Atlantic Hotels in Fez, all of them good and greatly to be recommended. One of them is just outside the dusty gate by which we entered and is called Belle Vue. Another is the noted Palais Jamai, just inside the Bab Guisa, and the third is opposite the post office, on the brow of the hill down which the town sweeps. This is an old Arab house, the harem of which has been turned into the dining-room, and smaller houses around it have been gradually absorbed

to meet its growing need for space, so that one comes across all manner of little staircases leading round odd corners, and the whole hotel is on different levels.

The next morning in blazing sunshine we went out for the first time with our special guide who had already prepared elaborate plans for us to follow, but, having plenty of time, we preferred to see the whole place leisurely, and for the first few days we just strolled about, learning the general direction of the streets and the position of the various mosques, gardens and colleges. Fez is a town of running water, for the river itself runs right through the city, often underground though sometimes appearing between the houses, where it turns a mill-wheel, is cast up in a fountain or fills one of the placid pools in the great courtyards.

We were particularly interested and intrigued by this river. One meets evidence of it so often that it seemed as though there must be many streams, and it was not until our guide explained it fully to us that we grasped the fact that they were all part of the same river. He told us that the River Fez enters the upper town, Fez-el-Djedid, as one huge stream, but branches to the right in many rivulets which fall in cascades, entering the city again in the arcade of Bab-el-Djedid. From there a canal drains off part of it, which supplies the Andalous quarter and gardens

of its suburb. When the river comes out from Fez-el-Djedid it divides again into two arms, one flowing to the right and the other to the left. Both of these break up once more into smaller streams, appearing and disappearing all through the quarters. There are two systems of pipes, one carrying the fresh, pure water and the other carrying away the foul, dirty water, thus creating an excellent natural sewer system which has worked for centuries. All the dirty water eventually pours itself into that branch of the river which is called the El Kebir and becomes the great drain of the town, and its waters are distributed among the gardens and orchards beyond the walls on the other side. Thus Fez has been singularly blessed far beyond the lot of any other Moroccan city. There is water everywhere, the smallest and poorest house can have a fountain in its tiny courtyard, there are huge fountains in all the streets, pools of water in the large courts of palaces, mosques, medersas, plenty of water for the innumerable baths, and enough left for the natural sewage system which keeps the whole town fresh and clean. When it is realised that it is all swiftly running water, that impurities can be naturally carried away, it will be realised what an inestimable blessing all this water is. But for this, the city, with its closely packed houses, its narrow streets and its crowded population numbering far over one hundred and fifty thousand, might well be

impossible to live in during the summer; as it is Fez is one of the most healthy towns in the country.

I do not think I have ever visited a city which interested me as much as Fez did. But I certainly know none so difficult to describe! Even although one may have heard much about it and read all there is to read about it, be accompanied by residents and guides who know it well, it is extremely confusing at first. I, accustomed to find my way quickly about foreign cities, to note landmarks and orient myself in a few days, took weeks to know Fez.

It was not until I took an instructor and studied its history that I really felt I knew it. There are many books on Moorish history, all, of course, in Arabic, but several are translated, and the stories of the others were told to me by the learned Moor who consented to accept me as his pupil. These books fascinated me, not only by their interesting contents but by their enchanting names. There is the *Roudh-el-Quartas*—the Garden of Leaves—written by a Moor of Granada in 1325, which tells the history of Fez up to the ninth Merinide Sultan. There is the *Nozhet-el-Hadi*—The Recreation of the Camel Driver—telling the story of the Saadien dynasty. Then there is the most fascinating *Ettor-dieman Elmo-Arib*—an interpreter who gives a clear account of the dynasties of the East and of the West, which brings us up to 1812. The *Istigsa* was the history of all the dynasties of Morocco

up to 1900 and the *Selouet-el-Anfas*—the Consolation of Souls—tells all about saints, holy men and Marabôuts buried in Fez and the surrounding country. There are still older books which are not translated at all, but from which my instructor told me many stories and histories. Whenever I was tired or footsore, I went to his house, sat on his shady verandah and listened to his tales, slowly told in the picture language of the East, always used by a Moor even when he is speaking a foreign tongue. I shall never forget those sunny afternoons when he unfolded to me the history of Morocco, and particularly of Fez. It was a new edition of the tales of the Arabian Nights.

Far, far back in Mecca, the descendants of the Prophet quarrelled together, as the great Charifian families of the East always did. Moulai Idriss, one of the grandsons, fled the country intending to found a kingdom elsewhere. He came from Egypt by way of the north coast of Africa as far as Oualily in the Zerhoun in 1788, where the Berber tribes welcomed him with enthusiasm, saying this descendant of Mohammed was a fitting representative of their own freedom and liberty, one under whom they might form themselves into a Musselman Empire, which should rival the Abbasid Kalifate itself. As time went on more and more tribes joined his banner and his cause and it was his son, Moulai Idriss II, who found his father's city too small and who, according to the ancient prophecy,

founded the great city of Fez where Sef had stood so many centuries before. But naturally Fez of those days was not the town as one sees it to-day. The river divided it into two natural parts, one of which Moulai Idriss gave to the tribes who had followed him from the Zerhoun, which was on the left bank of the river and called El Karaouiyn, while the second quarter on the right bank was called El Andalous and was occupied by the many thousand Moors who had been expelled from the great province of Cordoba in Spain and who now threw in their lot with Moulai Idriss. This is the first Fez so named, and the Jewish population were then enclosed in a special part called El Yehoudi. When Moulai Idriss died he was buried in his mosque of Shorfa which was then the most important mosque in the town, and his son reigned in his stead. The Idriss dynasty prospered exceedingly, and it was during the reign of the great-grandson of Moulai Idriss II that the two great mosques were built, which are still famous to-day. They were the gifts of two daughters of a rich lady of Karaouiyn, and were built in the two great quarters taking their names—El Karaouiyn and El Andalous. In those ancient days the two quarters formed separate towns, and walls were built between them. They were often at war with each other, and it was not until the Almohad Sultans pulled down the inner walls—and made Karaouiyn and Andalous again one city—that the fiercest fighting ceased.

The two quarters remained, however, in constant rivalry, and it was only much later when they became again united as one great city, that the rancour between them ceased. There was an old saying which is still sometimes heard to-day: "The men in El Karaouiyn are magnificent but the women in El Andalous are most beautiful."

The Almoravid and the Almohad Sultans vastly preferred Marrakesh, which they had founded, to Fez, but they too strengthened its walls, built many new mosques and enhanced the beauty of the old ones with rich carvings and gifts. Under the Merinide Sultans Fez was made the actual capital of Morocco and in 1274 the Emir Jacob-ben-Abdel-Haq founded Fez el Djedid—new Fez—at the top of the hill to get room for his own tribe, the Beni-Meryan. The old town then took the name of Fez-el-Bali—old Fez—by which it is known to the present day. Fez-el-Djedid is a great mass of palaces, walls, barracks and castled towers. It looks, indeed, like an enormous fortress dominating the old town. In the centre is a huge block of buildings, the formidable enclosure of the Dar-el-Makhzen, the seat of government and the place where the Sultan resides when he visits the capital. There is the imperial palace with its green tiled pavilions, its high walls and its gardens, several mosques, barracks, a large hospital and the many houses where the servants of the court live, all the country Moors and those from other towns

who come to live in Fez, for old Fez guards most rigorously its rights of citizenship and except for the students who come to study at the Medersās, it is difficult for anyone who is not a born Fasis, to obtain a house there. Right through Fez-el-Djedid runs a huge street, starting at the Bab-es-Segma, where one enters the walls, and going right through the multitudinous walled courts and passages to the Bab-es-Semmarin, where it ends. And in this street are the little shops and souks which sell the necessities of life. For all else the inhabitants of Fez-el-Djedid must go down to old Fez. The old town and the new town are connected by a quarter called the Bou Jeloud, which contains a palace and part of the royal gardens as well as public gardens, a mosque and a little Kasbah. It is here that the River Fez flows through the meadows in a broad stream, and it is here that most of the fêtes and festivals of the students are held. When there is not festival this open space is filled with beggars and gipsies, medicine men and story-tellers, snake-charmers and dancers, a motley throng. It looked to me like No-Man's Land, and the guide smiled when I said so. "Well, of course, it could be easily defended if confusion broke out between the quarters," was all he would hazard.

Fez-el-Bali is the real city, in very truth the heart and centre of Morocco. It extends down the sides of the hills, the high houses crowding up against each other till they touch the very

outside walls. No-one can imagine the difference in the place as seen from the streets and as looked down upon from a roof situated on the heights. From the first, standing in a narrow street, one looks up at high forbidding houses whose blank, windowless walls almost meet at the top and, but for a streak of blue sky, one sees nothing. The streets all curve, so one cannot even see out at the end of the street. Blank walls surround one, and one might well be at the bottom of a canal gazing up to the sky. From a roof the view is so different that one can scarcely realise it as the same city. Here one sees a succession of flat roofs with minarets, tiny summer houses and an occasional tree-top emerging from a courtyard. These roofs descend in terraces down the hill, looking in the daytime like large uneven steps, all entirely devoid of life—for no-one ventures on their roofs until evening—and separated by long, dark-looking slits, which are the streets. Gradually we begin to be able to pick out the minarets of the different mosques. From the garden running parallel along the hill one sees the mosque Sidi Ahmed-ech-Chaoui, which looks down on the Karaouiyyin quarter; all the other celebrated mosques and souks are lower down; on the right bank of the river are the minarets of Moulai Idriss, El Karaouiyyin and Erresif, on the left a huge, ornamental gate and minaret of El Andalous. Fez has so many mosques and sanctuaries that I never found out really how many there

were, but there are sixteen Khotba Mosques, at which the great Friday prayer may be celebrated, and this is said at different hours in each. When the Sultan is in Fez the great Friday prayer is said by him in the mosque Fez-el-Djedid at noon, and it is also celebrated at that hour in the mosques of Moulai Idriss and El Andalous. In the mosque of El Karaouiyyin it is celebrated at half past one, and in the mosque Bab-el-Guissa at three in the afternoon. It was more and more borne in upon me how completely religion dominates the city, for time is divided far more by the hours of prayer than by the clock. The regular hours of prayer are *fedjr* (dawn), *ouli* (noon), *dohr* (about 1.30 p.m.), *asser* (between three and four o'clock), *maghrab* (sunset), and *acha* (after dark). At these times the Muezzin ascends the tower of each minaret, from the wooden beam hanging from the corner of which a white flag is flown by day and a lantern is hung by night. The Muezzin calls all Believers to prayer, standing at each corner of the turret in turn:

“Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar, God is great—there is no God save God and Mohammed is his Prophet—Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar, come to prayer, come to do good, Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar, there is no God save God, Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar.”

At night Fez has a special tradition of her own. One of her great sons, during a long illness, was

so impressed with the silence and solitude of the night that on his recovery he offered in gratitude to God a special service of prayer. He founded a fraternity called the Companions of the Sick, who are all Muezzins, and whose office is hereditary and who are ten in number. Each night every half hour they succeed each other, crying their praise of Allah from the minaret of El Karaouiyn, and the last hoists the signal of dawn and cries the special morning prayer—Sobh—which is not called by other Muezzins. This prayer of the dawn is very beautiful, for it starts with the words :

“The night has gone with its darkness and the day has come with its glorious light.”

Then follows the usual prayer—Allah Akbar, etc.

The Companions of the Sick have specially fine voices, and are trained to sing their prayer in different keys; in this manner the devout Fasi can recognise from the voice of the Muezzin what o'clock it is, as he knows which key the man intones in. Since some years other mosques employ Muezzins to cry the last three half hours before dawn, but only in El Karaouiyn do the Companions of the Sick call all the half-hours. Friday is the sacred day in Mohammedan countries, and on this day a blue flag is flown from the minarets instead of a white one; we always watched for these flags with great interest.

The minarets and the different mosques vary very much, the oldest being bare and heavy, clumsy white towers surrounded by an ugly cupola; those are the minarets of El Karaouiyyin and El Andalous. Next in age come the mosques of the Merinide sultans, the minarets of which are the glory of Fez; they are tall, slender, beautiful towers of brick, covered with tiled mosaic, with a very delicate top, generally crowned with a gilded ball. The great mosques of Abou-el-Hassan in Fez, el-Bali, and the Medersa of El-Bou-Ananiya, have those beautiful towers. The mosques of Moulai Idriss, Erresif, and Sidi Ahmed-ech-Chaoui in the old town, and the mosque of the Dar-el-Makhzen in the new town, have minarets with the same graceful lines, but they are covered with green tiles, instead of the beautiful pottery mosaics. They are the most modern of all, and one soon learns to distinguish between them. The mosques themselves are all built on the same principle, a broad court in the centre with a fountain or pool in the middle. Round this are arcades or cloisters, either in white or in mosaics; there is a great deal of cedar-wood carving, all of the roofs and ceilings are made of it, and the doors are magnificent specimens of the sculptor's art. A screen of carved wood-work is set across the open arched entrance so that no stranger may see within, and it is unwise for a foreigner to try to look inside or show the slightest interest in this place of worship. We,



INNER COURT AND DOOR OF THE BOU ANANIYA MEDERSA

as women, were specially cautioned to turn our faces aside when we passed the open door of a mosque, and in the case of the shrine of Moulai Idriss, which was always surrounded by a vast throng, we noticed that we were conducted in such a way that it was impossible, without turning back to look, to get even a glimpse at the shrine through its open door.

If Fez is the heart and centre of Morocco, the shrine of Moulai Idriss is the heart and centre of Fez, and it is here that the whole interest of the place culminates. Directly the Sultan arrives he pays a visit to the tomb of its patron saint, and all notable visitors do the same. The saint's body lay first in a small mosque, but the number of pilgrims and visitors to this shrine made the sultan Moulai Ismail—he who built Meknes—build a special mosque for the sacred remains on the same spot, and the tomb is now in the centre of a square pavilion, part of the great mosque which has one of the most beautiful minarets in Fez. The tomb itself is covered with draperies and flags, and is surrounded by many grandfather clocks, special gifts of the faithful. At night a circle of oil lamps burn round the shrine, the doors of which are never closed. The gifts sent and brought are incredible; many offerings of gold and silver ornaments, clocks, vases, lamps, and even live stock are brought by those who come to ask a favour from the saint. In addition, there are two huge coffer in which

gifts of money are placed, and there is a most curious custom followed by the passers-by, who throw coins on to the tomb from a window which gives directly on to it. No-one can see through this window; it is high up, the coins are just thrown in with the hope that they may alight upon the tomb. At no time can one pass without seeing people doing this, and there are always some devout worshippers kneeling there, their heads pressed against the outside walls or even against the steps at the entrance.

Further than this, the place is sacred—*horm*—next to the town of Moulai Idriss, the most inviolate sanctuary in all the country. When the Caid is in difficulties or find themselves losing favour with their overlord, they come at once to this shrine and, under its protection, consider themselves quite safe. All unfortunate people fly here for refuge, and when some official has embezzled state funds, or even when murder has been done, if only they have time to reach this shrine no-one can touch them. By universal consent this sanctuary has remained inviolate actually up to the present day, but as this leads to great difficulties with hardened criminals, some arrangement had perforce to be arrived at, and it was very cleverly done. There is a special house connected with the mosque called the House of the Tent, because it is on the very spot where Moulai Idriss II pitched his tent when he was planning the foundations of

the city, and there the refugees are lodged. In the case of a real criminal the Makhzen, or government council, is approached by those who charge him and negotiations are begun. If the refugee is obliged to leave the sanctuary to attend the courts or to meet his accusers, he is given to take with him a piece of the Koran used by Moulai Idriss himself, as a kind of safeguard, which gives him the same protection as does the sanctuary itself. There are many other sanctuaries in Fez, but none of them possess the virtue of Moulai Idriss.

Closely connected with the mosques are the Medersas, the colleges belonging to the great universities of which the mosque is the religious centre, and these are particularly interesting buildings, famous all over Morocco. There used to be nine attached to the Karaouiyin University, but several have been disendowed. The six which are left are Bou Ananiya, El Attarin, El Mesbahiya, Es Saffarin, El Sherratin, and Bab el Guissa. The students, or Tolba, live with their parents or relations, if they have any in Fez. If they are strangers from different towns they buy the key of one of the rooms in the different colleges and keep it for the whole period of their studies, either selling it when they leave or giving it to some poorer student. Classes meet in the morning and evening, the first instruction being lectures on law, the second being grammar, logic, elocution and rhetoric, and there are also lectures on astronomy

and mathematics. But the education of a young Moor begins when he is a mere baby, and consists in the learning of the Koran by heart. For this he goes to a tiny day-school at the early age of five. One finds these little district schools everywhere. A boy knows his Koran—or ought to do so—by the age of twelve, when he leaves school. For the sons of the poorer people his education is then at an end, and he is apprenticed to a trade. Among the wealthier classes, however, the boy then becomes a Tolba, and, selecting a certain course of study, begins his lectures and enters on the gay life of a student, which seems in every country to be much about the same. Some, of course, are keen on learning and work hard, but the majority study a little and play a great deal.

Each year the Tolba have a great festival of their own in Fez, which is faithfully carried out according to a very ancient custom. Early in April they ask the Sultan's permission to celebrate this students' festival, which consists in the choosing of a mock Sultan, and a week of general gaiety and rejoicing at his mock court. It is a sort of carnival, or spring festival, at which all the students play a particular part, but in which all the inhabitants of the town participate. As soon as the royal permission is obtained the mock sultanate is put up for auction, and all the medersas bid against each other, each striving hard to buy it so that the honour may belong to their college. Last year the sultanate

was bought for two hundred and fifty duros (about fifty pounds) by the Medersa of El Attarin. The rich students give all they can towards this auction, for after a special college has bought it the students of that college draw lots as to who shall impersonate the Sultan. This is an important position, for whoever draws the favoured lot can ask a special favour for himself or his family from the real Sultan—remission of taxes for the rest of his life, the liberation or pardon of any member of his family who is in prison, or in royal displeasure, or other boons, which are never refused. As soon as the lots are drawn the mock Sultan sends word to the real Sultan, who lends him, for his week, all that is necessary to maintain his rank, a guard of soldiers, royal robes, a saddled horse, the servants who hold his stirrup, who carry his umbrella, and who keep off the flies with silk scarves. Meanwhile the Sultan of the Tolba sends his messengers to all the great Pashas and men of the town soliciting their help and generosity. The appeal is made in an amusing manner. I quote a request made to the Pasha of Fez, who permitted me to copy it exactly:

"To our devoted servant,

Sidi Bauchta el Baghadi, Grand Pasha of Fez.

"I inform you hereby that our sovereign lord, the Sultan (God give him the victory) has authorised us to celebrate this our feast as it has been celebrated by his ancestors. All

arrangements have been made for the proper celebration of the said feast, and mighty vessels have been prepared for the reception of the viands. So we desire of you to lose no time in paying the subscription which has always been given by your ancestors of one thousand years before the creation of Adam. If you conform with our request all will be well, but if you do not we will send out against you our most victorious armies of fleas and bugs which will keep you from eating at your table or sleeping in your bed. Pay up quickly, if you need pack-mules to carry your money to us we will send our victorious army to fetch it!"

A great deal of money is subscribed, for not only do the Fasis, the people of Fez, themselves enjoy this festival (they uphold greatly all ancient customs) but they all desire to stand well with the students, who play pranks and inconvenient jokes if they are slighted. One week is enough for all preparations, and the Friday following the election the Tolba sultan leaves the Medersa with great ceremony. He proceeds, accompanied by all the students of the town, to read the Friday prayer in his character as Sultan, in the mosque of El Andalous, after which he visits the shrine of the saint Sidi Ali-ben-Hazarem, the patron saint of students. On the following day the mock Sultan, with his whole retinue, goes out from the old city and proceeds to his tent which has been placed by the

banks of the river beyond Fez-el-Djedid, surrounded by the tents of his court. For seven days the fête lasts, many of the townsfolk coming out to join in the festivities. Innumerable picnics take place on the hillside, and in the evening there is dancing, feasting, and always music. On the seventh day the real Sultan sends gifts in money, provisions, tea, etc., which are gratefully received, and always at the end of the week the Sultan himself comes to visit the camp. The Sultan of the Tolba and his friends go out to meet their royal visitor, and there is a jesting play enacted between the two Sultans which ends in the Tolba Sultan throwing himself from his horse to do reverence to his rightful lord, kissing his stirrup and his knee in the correct fashion, and handing him his petition for special favours. This brings the great feast to an end, and the mock Sultan flees the camp at day-break the following day. If he is caught by any of his fellow-students before he has reached his own college they are at liberty to play any trick on him they like without his being able to retaliate. He is Sultan of the Tolba no longer, but just an ordinary student like themselves.

CHAPTER TEN

Fez—Visit to Court-house and Trial of Prisoners—The Tala—
The Habous System of Local Government—Family Life in Fez
—Superstitions and Customs—Moorish Music and Songs—
Palace of Dar Batha—The Museum.

ALTHOUGH no woman may visit a mosque upon any condition, we were able to see some of the Medersas, and were particularly struck with the extraordinary beauty of the Bou Ananiya. Its carved doors leading to the inner cloister, and the wealth of decoration shown on the walls of the courtyard, are unbelievable. It is, indeed, one of those wonderful buildings which the Bible describes as "cieled with cedar and painted with vermilion." Owing to the kindness of General the Comte de Chambrun, head of the military department in Fez, we were able to see many things of which the ordinary visitor has no idea. The General not only lent us his own aide-de-camp and interpreter, a young French officer, whose knowledge of Arabic equals that of his own language, but procured for us permission to visit several Moorish palaces, to attend interesting ceremonies, and to see some of the most notable people in the town. One of the most interesting events was our morning spent in the court of the Pasha of

Fez, Sidi Bauchta-el-Baghadi, a venerable nobleman held in the greatest reverence by the whole of the city. In his day he had been a great warrior, but now that he is old he lives very simply, never receives visitors in his own house, and never pays any but official visits himself. Nevertheless, he administers justice in the court house, the Dar Bou Ali, in the lower part of the city, two days a week, and we were fortunate enough to hear a court held. We were accompanied by the French officer, General the Comte de Chambrun's own interpreter, who explained the proceedings to us. The court is held in a large room opening on to a large courtyard, with a garden in the centre. Round this courtyard were ranged all those whose cases were to be tried, with their accusers, witnesses, etc., who were all waiting to receive the Pasha when we arrived. He came punctually at ten o'clock, dressed in the fine white robes of a highly-bred Moor, seated on his white mule, and accompanied by his servants and Mokhaznis. As he came into the courtyard the whole assembly salaamed and cried out: "May Allah bless our lord the Pasha and give him long life!" and the Pasha answered, "And upon you, peace and the blessing of the All-Merciful."

Immediately he had dismounted the young officer presented us to him, and the Pasha at once invited us to assist at his court. High cushions of matting were placed for us just behind the Pasha's own

seat, so that we could see all that occurred. In the long room a low dais of raised wood covered with carpets is placed, and the Pasha sits in the centre at the back, two Moorish scribes on his right hand and two representatives of the Protectorate on his left. He faces the open archway, on the step of which those who wish judgment come and kneel. The Mokhaznis stands at one side of the arch, calling out the names of plaintiff and defendant as they kneel down on the step; immediately one of the Moorish scribes reads out a short synopsis of the case and the Pasha tells the two men before him to state the facts. The plaintiff tells his story and the defendant answers with his. Maybe they have witnesses, who are then called up by the Mokhaznis from the courtyard and stand behind them. The Pasha asks a few questions; if it is a case in which any foreign dealing is concerned he consults with the representative of the Protectorate, but usually he gives the verdict almost immediately. It is all very simple, the people accepting the Pasha's verdict as a matter of course. They look upon him as their father as well as their judge and there is never any argument, his decision being accepted as final quite willingly. They kiss the stone step when the judgment is pronounced, get up and go to their punishment without a word.

We heard five cases tried, the French officer translating for us as they went on, to enable us to follow

the stories. The first case was two men who had had a fight in a *hamman*—a bath—and one had been killed; not, apparently, by intention; in the struggle he had fallen and broken his neck on the steps, but his friends wished to make out that the other man had tried to murder him. The Pasha gave verdict at once that it was an accident but admonished the man for fighting. The second was another fight, this time with obvious intent to kill—a fight with daggers—and one man had died of his wounds. This was manslaughter, again admonition against fighting and a fine to be paid; as the second man was so badly wounded he had to be carried on a litter, and was too ill to be given corporal punishment. The third case was most amusing; it concerned a man who had sold to another five jars of oil; two had been opened when the sale took place and were found to be full of excellent oil, so the deal was concluded and the money paid. When, weeks later, the purchaser came to the fifth jar he found it full of stones in place of oil! This case occupied a long time, for both parties brought numerous witnesses to prove their different stories; it hung on whether the fifth jar when it was bought was full of stones. The plaintiff pleaded that it had been delivered to him full of stones, the defendant saying he would have felt by its weight had it been stones and would have refused to accept it. The plaintiff answered that the stones had been carefully selected

so as to weigh exactly as much as the oil would have done. The jar was produced—one of those Ali Baba jars, in which a man could easily be concealed. It seemed impossible to prove anything till a bright idea struck the defendant and he asked where the stones were, what had the plaintiff done with the immense number of stones necessary to fill such a jar? Could they be found at his house? That seemed to stump him, for he became confused, and said he did not know what had become of the stones. The Pasha told his Mokhaznis to examine the jar; with enormous difficulty it was turned upside-down and a few drops of oil ran out; that settled it—verdict for the defendant.

The last case was most interesting of all. Two most miserable creatures came and lay down before the steps; literally they lay down in the dust and stretched their arms out in supplication. A few words were murmured and a deathly silence and gloom fell on the whole court; all the faces became very grave and the Pasha shook his head.

"This must be some very terrible murder," I said to the officer, "or they have committed some atrocious crime."

"They have been guilty of the most horrible disgrace that can befall a Mohammedan," he answered, "*they have been found drunk.*"

I had forgotten how heinous an offence that is to followers of the Prophet, but we quickly realised how such a lapse is regarded by all true Believers.

The men got a sentence of imprisonment of three years each.

Shortly after this we took our leave, thanking the Pasha for having permitted us to be present at his court. Kindly and courteous old man! He asked us if there was any possible thing he could do to make our stay in Fez pleasant and agreeable, offering to lend us some of his servants and to help us in any way in his power.

On our way back to the hotel a charming incident occurred, which proved the politeness and courtesy of the Moors of Fez in spite of all that had been told us about their fanatical feelings regarding foreigners. The Pasha's court being held in an old house at the bottom of Fez-el-Bali, the French officer accompanied us back to our hotel, as the streets in the old town are so confusing and intricate, and we had not then been there long enough to find our way about easily. As we were nearing home we met in a narrow lane, close to the General's house, two magnificently robed Moorish gentlemen who salaamed and stopped us, speaking to the French officer. He immediately translated their conversation to us. "These gentlemen," he said, "desire to be presented to you. They wish me to tell you how proud and honoured they feel in Fez that learned and educated foreigners visit their town, and they hope you are interested and happy here." We at once thanked them, begging the French officer to tell them that we thought their

town most beautiful and the inhabitants most interesting, and we shook hands with them. Whereupon they enacted the charming Moorish ceremony of kissing their hands where ours had touched them, bowed deeply with their hands on their hearts, and went on their way.

"But how could they possibly know who we were?" we asked the officer in astonishment.

"They have just been to pay a visit to the General, who told them. Did you not notice their robes of ceremony? The General told them that I was escorting two *femmes des lettres* to the Pasha's court."

I was very much touched and pleased by this occurrence, and, indeed, it is impossible for me to recount all the courtesy and friendliness shown to us wherever we travelled in Morocco, by the people of the country. Again and again, when they heard I was interested in their land and writing about it, invitations came for me to see private houses, collections of carpets, pottery, embroideries, or to visit famous gardens. Everyone was eager to point out to me special views of well-known beauty, to arrange festivals or to tell me anything they could to illustrate the life and customs of their country.

The Moors of Fez, in particular, pride themselves upon their refinement and civilisation. It was written long ago in "The Garden of Leaves": "The inhabitants of Fez are always of a more subtle

and acute intelligence than the other places of the Maghrab." They have a word which describes this life very well—Hadhariya—which means Citizen-life, the life of educated people with refined manners and cultivated tastes. This Citizen-life is used in contra-distinction to Badiya—life in Bedouin cities—or Aroubiya—life in Arab tents. Rabat, Meknes, Marrakesh, Tetouan, Tangiers and—above all—Fez, are all known as citizen cities; and the Fasis, or inhabitants of Fez, consider themselves to represent the highest culture of the country. One will say proudly, "I am a Fasi," in the same way as an Englishman will say, "I am a Londoner," or a Frenchman, "I am a Parisian."

Gradually we began to find our way about the streets alone, and those streets were a never-ending joy. It was all so strange and unusual, so old and dignified, for these are the houses of an ancient and aristocratic city, although they look so grim and forbidding to us. No Moorish house has windows; so blank, high walls line the old streets, with just a small arched doorway leading through a narrow corridor to the huge courtyard in which the luxury and riches of the house are displayed. It was like being in another world—the world of Ali Baba and his Forty Thieves—to see a small door open in the high wall and a line of heavily laden mules come out, pass into the lane, and the door quickly closed again. At night in these deserted and silent streets

one comes across many a mule tethered up in a corner, awaiting his master who is paying a visit to a house near; or one stands aside to let a finely clad Moorish prince pass by. He sits high in his saddle with his slave running by his side, holding his master's stirrup, and one has to crush oneself against the wall, there is so little room to pass in some of these narrow streets. The Moors invariably ride mules, which they prefer to horses, as the gait is surer and does not jerk them or disarrange the folds of their flowing robes. Horses are left to the Bedouin tribes or used only in a campaign. The heavily padded saddle with high pommel before and behind, makes the Moors enormously high when mounted and as one meets them coming down the street (Fez being on a hill, the streets are all on a very steep incline) they look formidable and terrifying.

The first street I got to know well was the Tala, a long thoroughfare which leads, twisting and turning, right through the city. The stream of life here is endless; no-one could describe it; it drifts past and you go with it, picking out what strikes your eye, missing, perhaps the most interesting aspect! A blind beggar sitting at the side, crying out—not for alms, but the name of his God—ceaselessly. A great prince on his mule with slaves holding his stirrup and his Mokhaznis carrying documents. Children running about, the boys with bare legs and a single coloured robe, carrying on

their heads slabs of wood with loaves of bread to the bakers; men selling sweetmeats, water-carriers, veiled women, always the sound of rushing water, for the cascades of the river are everywhere, constantly the voices of children chanting the Koran—a welter of life, hurrying and pulsing and beating and throbbing—that is the first impression. The Tala has many offshoots and one can pass directly from this busy main street into a narrow, quiet lane, almost dark, between high house walls where heavy doors, studded with enormous nails, open on some old residential house one could never dream would be there. The keys of these doors are enormous, often a foot long, for the key is a sign of possession. One buys a key and owns whatever it opens, just as a student buys a key and owns a room in the college for as long as he studies there.

One wanders out again, this time into a Souk, overlaid with rushes to keep the fierce sun out, so that great patches of light and shade make patterns on the ground. Here is the usual buying and selling, with a merchant sitting in the centre of his wares, reaching out his hands easily to get to them, weighing his goods in scales, delivering them to his customers, without ever moving from his seat. Again and again we wandered into the large open rooms where carpets were shown, where brass was hammered, where leather was being worked, and the shopkeepers offered us tea, incense to sniff, cushions

to sit on, and were willing and anxious to show us their wares, whether we bought or not. Then we wandered out again and stood watching the great ovens being fed with brushwood, and the line of children waiting with their loaves—they cost a farthing each to bake. Then back again to the Tala to see the famous clock of the Bou Ananiya, which has been so long silent that no-one knows how it works. The clock consists of thirteen bronze bowls which stand on a kind of brick or beam of carved wood; one bowl struck each hour and the thirteenth struck the half-hours. The whole outside of the clock seems perfect, only it cannot be made to go. But time matters nothing in Fez; besides have they not got their hours of prayer cried from the minaret of each mosque? The legend of the clock says that a Jew cast a spell upon it as the sounding of its bronze hammers disturbed his wife who was expecting her first child. Anyway all Jewish women still come to this place to pray for a safe delivery, so the legend still lives on!

Later I learned to find my way down to the Place Nejjarine, where the Souk of the carpenters is situated. Here there is always a delicious smell, for many of the men are working in sandal-wood, as well as in cedar and pine. The shrine of Moulai Idriss may be the centre of the religious life of the place, but the Place Nejjarine is the centre of all trading. Here is the great fondouk where all

caravan dues are paid, where they put camels, mules, horses or asses, and there is a regular system of payment for each. The system of trading is in the hands of the Habous, a sort of commercial council which, after the government itself, is the most important body in Fez, immensely rich and owning most of the property of the town. The ramifications of this council are enormous for they own not only the souks and fondouks, markets, ovens, mills and over twenty-six *hamman*, or baths. All these they let out, "selling the keys" on very long leases. This great council is divided into two principal parts, those connected with the mosques or religious services and the monies accruing from them (except those of the principal shrines, like Moulai Idriss, gifts made to which going to support the descendants of the special saint to whose shrine they are given), going to the Medersas and to the provision for public instruction; and those connected with public service and trading. These two departments again split up into numerous subdivisions; there is a habous which looks after the poor and sick, another which pays for the burial of strangers who die in Fez, another that attends to the cleaning of the sewer system and the order and maintenance of the Souks and markets (nothing to do with the renting of the same).

A particular habous is concerned with the distribution of the bread in prisons, another is charged with the arrangement for prayers, and the chanting

of the Koran in the towers of defence on the old walls, and yet another with the lighting of Fez el Bali.

I was told of a number of habous which have fallen into disuse—one employing a man to collect the dead cats and rats and paid him so much a head. Another was concerned with the marriage of very poor people—a kind of matrimonial agency—which loaned them wedding robes, jewels, etc., and even provided them with a house for one week, so that their first marriage days should be happy and free from care. The strangest of all was a habous which provided a band of musicians to visit the lunatic asylum and entertain the inmates; if the condition of the inmates improved, the fees of the musicians were paid by the lunatic asylum; if not, the Great Habous had to provide the money themselves. This habous fell into abeyance long ago and I, personally, am not surprised. Most Arab music, heard for long, would drive a sane person mad, and what the effect must have been on those who were already lunatics is unthinkable! But all this shows what excellent and unique arrangements were made for the well-being of the Fasis. They certainly had the right to consider their city the most civilised and refined in the whole country.

We were long enough in Fez to see something of Moorish society. The highly bred Moors are extremely hospitable and if one has proper introduc-



NATIVE STREET IN FEZ

tions and remains some time in the place, many invitations are sent, and we found the greatest pleasure and interest in paying visits. The home life is one of great refinement if somewhat monotonous. The idea of the harem is not enforced in Fez in the same way as in any other part of the country, and I was told that polygamy is gradually disappearing. The men are, of course, immeasurably more interesting than the women, but there is now a school for young Moorish girls of the best families, organized by the Protectorate, where they are taught to speak French, to embroider and to hear something of the lives and customs of women in foreign lands. The women I saw in Fez seemed far more alive and interested in life than anywhere else. They asked many more intelligent questions, and had grasped the fact that unveiled women who go about by themselves lived a fuller and much more interesting life than they did. What they could not understand was how we had the energy to do it. "Is it not very fatiguing to travel?" was a question I was constantly asked; and "Who takes care of your house when you are absent?" was another. In a way it seemed to me quite natural that they should be alarmed at the idea of any energy, for they live the laziest lives, reclining on their divans most of the time, lying on the softest cushions, and being waited on hand and foot; they brought to my mind those women in the Bible—"who sewed pillows to all armholes

and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature." They could not understand a country where there were no slaves, or grasp the fact that women of gentle birth ever stayed in hotels—that they thought quite terrible!

In a Fasis family everyone, whenever possible, has his or her own room, and a special body servant to attend upon them. Most of these are negresses, good-looking women who go out into the Souks unveiled, make purchases for their mistress and bring back the gossip of the town. Family festivals are a great event to the women's lives—marriages, births, baptisms and circumcisions bring what gaiety and pleasure they enjoy. Their daily recreations are their evenings on the roofs, where they assemble in the little summer houses generally erected in the corner of every roof, chat with their neighbours, show off their clothes and jewels, and play their extraordinary music; often musicians come to entertain them but these never ascend to the roof, playing in the passage leading up to it. Cakes and tea and sweetmeats are usually offered if a visitor is there.

The negresses interested me very much; they are of all kinds, ranging from the simple maid-of-all-work to body servants corresponding to our lady's maid. These understand thoroughly the art of massage, and how to take care of the body. It is these experienced negresses that apply the Great Henna, one of the special adornments for marriage,

and they understand also the kholing of the eyes, the care of the nails, complexion, and the hair. There are also experienced cooks, and even musicians among the negresses; they are bought for sums which vary from forty duros (£80) up to one hundred duros (£200), but these latter are very accomplished, being either singers, dancers, musicians, or of great personal beauty; the number of negresses a family possesses shows its riches and status at once. These negresses, though slaves, have by no means a hard life; should one of them become a special favourite and bear her master a child, she immediately becomes a free woman, her child is legitimate, and she is in future paid wages if she so desires. If a negress considers herself ill-treated, or does not like her master and mistress, she flies to a shrine, takes refuge there and demands to be put up for sale again. In this way she can, if she likes, change her home. One of the great amusements of the ladies in Fez, is, perhaps, the peddler women, who come and visit them, bringing all sorts of jewels and toilet articles for them to buy, and also bringing charms, love potions, magic drinks, scents, and secret recipes. The women are all extremely superstitious, and their lives are regulated by good and evil omens. One must be very careful in bringing them flowers or a tiny gift, not to upset any of these strange superstitions, and it is always wiser before offering a present, even to a little child, to ask if his parents or guardian

will permit him to accept it. The belief in the evil eye is universal, and it is not considered good luck to ask if an ill person is recovering, or even to ask directly after individual members of a family: one simply says: "Is all well with your house?"

One of the most delightful and amusing experiences in Fez was an invitation to lunch in a Moorish house. We were accompanied by two European gentlemen, one of whom spoke Arabic fluently, and as one of the three brothers who were our hosts spoke a little French, we understood each other fairly well. The house was one of the oldest in the town, the property having been in the family for ages, but the house itself had been reconstructed by our hosts' grandfather and was considered modern by its owners. The youngest brother fetched us from our hotel for fear we should lose our way, which was well, as I do not imagine we should have found it alone—it led through the narrowest and darkest lanes and the last little street was so full of dust and looked so dingy and dilapidated that I imagined we were still far from our destination, and was astounded when the young Moor produced the usual enormous key and opened a tiny wooden door in a wall. This led to a curved and vaulted passage, ending in a large door, also carefully locked. Here our guide rang a little bell before he unlocked it, which was obviously a signal, for when it was opened there were

the two brothers just inside, having come down to the door to welcome us. Another corridor led to a large central court, and here was a marble basin forming a fountain in the middle with flower beds containing oleanders, orange trees, jasmine and roses round it. There were cages of singing birds on stands in the arches, and four or five large ornamental clocks of the grandfather variety standing against the walls.

We were ceremoniously conducted to the first floor, the apartments of the eldest brother, and ushered into the large audience room where the long divan of ceremonies stood. We were installed in the centre of this divan, and immediately slaves packed us in with cushions, pushing them behind our backs, under our arms, till we were sitting as in a well-padded armchair. Two smaller divans were wheeled up on either side, the French visitors sitting on one, the Moors on the other. The youngest brother was Master of the Ceremonies, for he gave the signal when we were seated, and the slaves came with the silver ewer and basin, one carrying the embroidered towels, and yet another drying our hands. Two low tables were then brought in with loaves of bread on one and a single knife; on the other was placed a huge dish with a high, peaked cover of straw over it, which the slave lifted with a flourish after he had put it down, revealing four chickens, most deliciously brown and crisp-looking. How they had been cooked I

never knew, but they were certainly the best chickens I had ever eaten. There was no sign of anything to eat them with, or any plates, just the chickens in their deep dish surrounded with a thick, brown sauce. My friend and I looked at each other; fortunately no-one spoke English. "Whatever they do, we must do the same," I whispered to her. The eldest brother looked smilingly at us; it was obvious we, as the guests, ought to begin, but it was equally evident we had no idea how to do so! Still smiling, he then took one of the chickens in his hand, holding it by the leg, and very delicately detached either side of the breast, giving one to each of us, while the second brother cut pieces of bread and handed them to us, telling us in French, to dip them in the gravy.

Once started, everyone ate with avidity, for the chickens were delicious; they were so perfectly seasoned that no salt or pepper or any condiment was necessary. Every now and then the host took off some little piece of white meat and offered it to us, which we accepted, first taking it from his fingers with our hands, but shortly, as we saw it was the custom when the host offers a special dainty, we opened our mouths and he put it just within the lips. It all sounds comical and humorous, but it was done with such grace and dignity that no-one could possibly have laughed. It was the custom of the country, and certainly as the natives did it it is a graceful and natural act. We

finished the chickens down to the very bones, and immediately slaves removed the dish, the bread and the tables, and the silver ewer and basin again appeared, this time with a tiny ball of scented soap, in order to remove any grease from the hands.

Another table was brought, this time slightly larger, and a very large silver platter arrived with a highly ornamented top, which, when removed, revealed the cous-cous. We gazed at this in amazement for if the chickens had been difficult to eat, this appeared impossible!

The cous-cous is the favourite national dish and there are several ways, apparently, of preparing it. Its principal ingredient is a kind of semolina, seasoned and garnished, spiced and flavoured according to taste. The cous-cous which was presented to us was heaped up into a point on the dish, with tiny roast birds (ortolans, I think), plums, chickens' livers and various succulent pieces of lamb, stuck round it. The semolina was cooked as they cook rice in India—soft, but with every grain distinct and separate. We gazed at this astonishing dish with alarm, and our host sat and smiled at us. "How do we eat it?" we said to our French friends. "You eat it with your fingers," they said. "You dig your fingers in, roll whatever you can into a little ball, and put it in your mouth." But neither of us could venture to put our fingers into the smoking mass. One is supposed to eat only with the right hand; an

experienced guest sits upon his left so that it shall be seen he does not use it. At last the eldest brother, with a smile, said some Arab words, which I found to be the equivalent of "If you will permit me," thrust two fingers and his thumb into the cous-cous, with great dexterity rolled the tiny portion he had taken into a small ball and offered it to me. I opened my mouth and allowed him to put it inside, whereupon everyone watched to see whether I liked it or not. It certainly was delicious, and it seemed to me that the only thing I could do was to open my mouth for more! From then on, the eldest brother fed me with cous-cous, and the second brother gave it to my friend in like manner. I liked it very much, and had I had a spoon to eat it with I might have eaten a great deal more! As it was, as soon as I became accustomed to the strange way of partaking of it I found myself greatly amused at the awkward efforts of the French gentlemen to eat it themselves. Nobody appeared to be able to roll the cous-cous into balls but the Moors themselves. The Frenchmen scooped it up with their fingers, and made a frightful mess. The Koran has a verse which says that there is a special blessing on food eaten in the fingers, and one must see it done by a highly-bred Moor to realise that it is not the disgusting habit we imagine it, but can be a delicate and artistic act.

After the cous-cous was finished, everything was cleared away, scented water was poured over our

hands, incense was brought to us, and the trays for tea. While our host was preparing this several other visitors arrived. Their manner of entry was charming. They came in silently, leaving, of course, their babouche at the step, kissed the shoulder of their host, and sat down on the edge of the divan until he presented them to us. As these gentlemen could speak no French, the conversation stopped, and we all listened to the murmur of the fountain of the court until suddenly a small band of musicians, seated outside on the verandah, began to play. Sprigs of scented verbenas, roses and jasmin, were handed to us, and all gave themselves up to enjoy in silence the sound of the music and the sweet scents of the flowers. There was something so dignified, refreshing, and beautiful about this entertainment that it seems impossible to convey the atmosphere which it evoked. It must be easy to meditate in Morocco, to rest quietly for hours, listening to the murmur of water, music, and the singing of birds: it provides a pleasant contrast to the chatter of conversation and the noisy jazz of a dinner party in Europe.

There were other invitations, which we accepted with great pleasure; invitations to come and see the sun set from some roof-garden, to watch the moon rise from a terrace, to hear music and singers, for music is one of the great features of life in Fez. No festival or entertainment is

considered a success without it. The artistes always combine these arts, being both singers and musicians; they sit on cushions or low divans, and the music they make is strange and haunting.

There are two great divisions of this music, one light and easy to follow, plaintive airs with a tune in them, which includes a kind of ballad music. These are sung to a rather desultory accompaniment, just chords thrummed in as a background, as it were, and the singer often improvises as he goes on. One hears this music all over Morocco, especially in the south. All the street musicians use it, and in a camp on the mountains, or in the Berber villages, there was generally someone who produced a lute or a fiddle, or even a drum, and beat out a throbbing measure to the words he chanted or intoned. This kind of music is called *Griha*, and is really the music of the people, though in the hands of a real musician (and there are many) it sometimes attains great beauty.

The music we heard most in Fez, however, was called the *Ala*, and was a much more serious affair. It is performed by four trained musicians, the instruments used being the violin, lute, rebeck, and the tambourine. When I first heard it, it reminded me enormously of the music I had so often heard in the south of Spain, made by the old villagers in out-of-the-way places. It had the really haunting sadness of the Malagueña. The airs, it is true, were much more complicated and

intricate, but the voice part always reminded me of some old melody I had heard in Spain.

When I first remarked on this everyone smiled, and I was told that this was the old Andalusian music, which the Moors had brought from Spain with them. The different Andalusian airs had been collected, their tunes and words carefully arranged by a musician called Hai'q, who had made them into a book which is well known to the whole of Morocco. All Moors have a lingering regretful love for their old homes in Andalusia, some of them even keep the key of their ancient houses there as heirlooms, and these songs of the old country lie very near their hearts. One hears in Morocco love songs, sentimental ballads to the beauties of nature, rhapsodies to a saint or to the Prophet, strange stirring songs of victory and battle, but of all of them I am quite sure these old songs of Andalusia are loved best.

They were always listened to in dead silence, and I cannot describe the romance and beauty of those wonderful evenings in Fez when we sat on the broad verandahs, watching the moon come up behind the mountains and listening, dreamily listening, to these songs of old Spain. After it was ended no-one bade farewell: it seemed as though no-one could bear to break the spell! The men rose silently, kissed their host's shoulder and just faded away. We quickly learned to take our leave, too, in silence, pressing our hands to

our hearts, bowing in the Moorish fashion and going back to the hotel with the slave who was always sent to accompany us.

I got two of the old Andalusian songs translated for me. As a rule they are enormously long, so long indeed that it takes between six and seven hours for the musician to perform the shortest of the *Noubas* or collection of poems printed in Hai'q's book. But the series is often done in three different parts, and so one is invited on three separate evenings, to hear the whole of it.

These translations are a kind of refrain, sung again and again at intervals between the stanzas of the series. The metre cannot be translated but the meaning runs as follows:

REMEMBRANCE

"Long ago, in Andalusia, in the green oasis of Sevilla
Where flows the swift and rushing Guadalquivir
Love took me by the hand and taught me all of joy there is to
know.

Oh! there, oh! there is joy, there is delight and enchantment
There where the moon shines through the orange groves
My love took me by the hand and taught me all of joy there
is to know.

Through the paved courtyard, the fountain splashes in the
moonlight
There in Andalusia, there the moon is still shining on the water.
There my love is waiting, waiting, to teach me all of joy there
is to know.

And I, a wayfarer, in this far-off land, I remember Andalusia.
I remember it in the core of my heart, in the blood of my veins,
in the breath of my body;

I remember my love, my lady, who is waiting in the gardens of Andalusia,
Waiting to teach me all of joy there is to know."

The other one—*Ya Asafi* (Longing) is best known of all:

"How I long for the past that has vanished, Allah! Those days of gladness and joy, those evenings so radiant and sweet. Andalusia, our home, that we have left behind us, how cruel to part us, never shall I forget thee.

Those glorious nights of Granada, happy city, where are they? Allah! 'Twas there I met the women who taught me love's meaning. Andalusia, our home, that we have left behind us, never shall I forget thee.

Allah! I implore thee of thy goodness, let me once more see that lovely land, Allah! Restore to me the land where my heart is and grant me to dwell there in peace. Andalusia, our home, that we have left behind us, never shall I forget thee.

Oh, Allah! whom the eyes see not and who never deceived the longing of any. All-Merciful, whose commands are without question, whose ways are past understanding, bring me once more to my home in Andalusia, that I have left behind me, Andalusia, never, never, shall I forget thee."

The palace of Dar Batha and its beautiful gardens lie on the heights, stretching between Fez-el-Bali and Fez-el-Djedid. It was the idea of Moulai Hassan's that this palace should be connected with the Dar Makhyn, or House of Government, but this grandiose scheme was never carried out. It was in these spacious courts and gardens that Moulai Abdul Aziz allowed the ladies of his harem to ride their bicycles and otherwise committed those extravagances which aroused so much horror

amongst his people. Part of this palace and its gardens are now the Residency, where the Governor of the Protectorate lives when he comes to Fez. The enormous quarters where the ladies of the harem lived now house a most fascinating museum of Moroccan antiquities, collected by M. Vicare, the present Curator, who showed it all to us himself and to whom I owe much of my information on Morocco.

It was a hot, hot afternoon and as we entered from the dusty road into the cool, green fore-court, and saw the orange trees with the fountain playing in their midst, I almost envied those ladies who had lived here for their lord's pleasure. Walking into the enormous main-court itself we were astonished at the magnificent display of flowers; there was an arched cloister all round, and roses, jasmine and climbing geraniums decorated its pillars. The air was heavy with the scent of the orange flowers. Doves cooed and strutted on the terrace, but all this beauty lay deserted and still. One old Moor dozed in the sun on the steps of the large stone terrace, from which the doors of the various halls opened. When he saw us he came forward and produced a bunch of such keys as one associates with Bluebeard's Castle! M. Vicare asked us to feel their weight, and I confess I should not have liked to own even one as a latchkey!

In the first hall are the old woven silks and brocades of Fez, so thick and heavy with gold and

silver thread that they stand alone; there were some robes and many arrases, for the walls of Moorish houses. At the farther end of the same hall were a variety of carpets and rugs, coming mostly from the districts round about; then there were some cases of old jewellery, roughly cut but very beautiful native head-pieces, earrings, bracelets, anklets, pendants. One specimen interested us enormously: it was of silver, heavily engraved, and had been studded with precious stones. We were told it had been found in the bed of the river near the Jewish quarter, and it had been brought to the Pasha of Fez, who presented it for the collection. It was believed to be an ornamental top of one of the scroll sticks which held the written roll of law in the Jewish tabernacle—undoubtedly twelfth century work—and notwithstanding its long immersion in the water, in fine preservation. More interesting still were the little wooden dolls, used for the purposes of magic by the hill-tribes, as wax homunculi of the fourteenth century were used in Europe. These little wooden dolls were tattooed in exactly the same fashion as the men and women of the tribes, and there were three specimens, representing a man, a woman, and a child.

Passing on to the next hall we came to the armoury of antique weapons, found in the town or neighbouring country, or presented by their former owners: two magnificent saddles flanked the centre arch of this hall, upholstered in satin with gold

embroideries, one being pale blue and the other rose colour, while very ornate stirrups attached were of damascened steel. There were as well the long-muzzled Arab rifles, a remarkable collection of knives and scimitars, and—astonishing object in this room—the impromptu royal sunshade made for El Hiba. El Hiba was the Pretender who headed a rising of the tribes at Marrakesh and attempted to seize the throne. But for the timely intervention of El Glaoui, who was on the spot, and quelled the rising, this might have turned out a very serious affair. As it was El Hiba was captured and put into a cage, where he could neither stand nor lie, and exhibited on festivals to the public. Many people in Fez, including our own guide, had gone out to gaze upon him, and seemed to think it quite an ordinary punishment. His cage is to be seen in this very museum in a farther hall, where are the finest specimens of old wood carvings in all Morocco.

These carvings are superb. They are pieces of ceilings, balconies and roof props from the most ancient medersas and buildings; some of the old cedar, turned grey with age, seems as though it were moulded out of soft grey velvet. Others are honey-colour, and others again are a rich, dark brown. There is a lovely little arch of stone which came from the south. It is all that is now left of the palace of many wonders, built in Marrakesh by El Mansour. His imperial demands for artists from

all over the civilized world must have been obeyed even from the very heart of Persia, for the Eastern tulip flowers in stone by the side of the Moroccan carnation, on the lintels of this lovely gateway.

The walls of the last hall we visited were covered with a collection of ceramics, which I should imagine unique. Here the art of the ancient potter is seen in its full glory; the genius with which they imprisoned true colour in earthenware and sealed it with their immortal glaze, thrills the heart, and yet fills it with sadness that such a secret should have been lost. There are plates and bowls, trenchers and dishes of colour and design to make a modern artist mad with envy. One of the favourite patterns of the old potters was the Wheel of Fortune, another the Spiral of Life, and with these two designs they made sport upon their plates. M. Vicare's brilliant arrangement on one wall of bowls and plates of the former design, makes that wall seem veritably in movement. As one gazes at it the plates seem actually to revolve, the design becomes alive, and the optical illusion is complete.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Fez—The Palais Jamai.

ANOTHER most interesting palace in Fez is the famous Palais Jamai, now the largest of the Trans-Atlantic Hotels there, a wonderfully beautiful place, but full of tragedy and sadness to me, for I could never forget the fate of the man who built it. It is one of the most terrible stories of Morocco.

We went often to see it, to have tea there, to dine there with friends, to gaze at the city from its broad terraced roof, from which it is claimed is the very finest and most comprehensive view of the town; but I always felt uncomfortable there and left it with relief. Its very walls have a tang of ill-omen: its beauty is sinister.

It stands just outside the city walls, close to the Bab el Guissa, and one leaves one's motor or carriage outside the gate, as no wheeled traffic may enter. From this entrance one comes almost at once into the long lane that leads to the upper garden and the palace itself, and enters directly into this wing of the building. Going through an archway and down the broad stone staircase one arrives at the terrace in front of what was the

great hall. The entrance is through an enormous arch, which once stood open but is now closed by glass doors, and the hall is still filled with carpets and divans as it used to be. One ascends a short staircase to a similar hall with much richer decoration, only in this hall the great arch forms the window and not the door, and is fitted with a wrought iron trellis through which one gazes upon an indescribable view. First the walled seclusion of the varied gardens of this palace on different levels, with their apricot trees, their roses, their orange trees, their mosaicked fountains, their long flight of tiled steps leading right down to the lower entrance, debouching through dark, twisting tunnels into the narrowest streets of the old town itself. As one's gaze wanders farther over the battlemented walls of the palace gardens, one sees the roofs of the town, those broad, flat, descending steps which the eyes follow as a staircase and beyond this the green country, the foot-hills, and, at last, Atlas, disappearing into the mists of the horizon.

It is difficult to tear oneself away from this view, but one must look at the astonishing decoration which has been lavished on this hall. The ceiling is unique, for every imaginable design, every conceivable colour, has been collected to enrich it. It becomes a confusion of beauty and the eye turns with relief to the somewhat simpler walls covered with verses from the Koran and from Arabic poets.

But the view draws you back and back; on the roof, from which this natural tapestry of town and country is more extensively unrolled before you, we spent many hours, just gazing at the roofs of the city and the rolling plain all pallid in the noon-day heat or flushed with the rosy light of sunset. I can well understand how the Moors meditate on the housetops. I sat there and thought of the fate of the man who had conceived and carried out this beauty: surely there never was a more typical story of life in Morocco, where fortune's wheel is ever turning swiftly, where the beggar of this year is the prince of next year, where the great man of to-day is the slave of to-morrow.

The palaces of the brothers Jamaï stood side by side on this spot. They came of an old family of Fez, those Auled Jamaï, and various members of that family had distinguished themselves for many generations before Haj-el-Maati-ed-Jamaï was Kalifa of Fez, and lived in this house. He was an ambitious man and rose to be Grand Vizier at the same time as his brother Si Mohammed Soreir was made Minister of War. So the family fortunes never looked brighter. They gave the most sumptuous entertainments in their magnificent palaces, these two brothers; many times must El Maati have watched the sunset from this roof, many times must he have sat in this garden watching the moonlight break through the leaves on to the water of the fountain.

Then swiftly fortune's wheel turned, and the change came. The old Sultan, Moulai Hassan, died, and his son, Abdul Azaiz, succeeded him. Now Moulai Hassan's Grand Vizier was that relentless and terrible Ba Ahmed, whose overweening ambition and relentless overriding of any who crossed his path had been kept in check by his master. Now that that master was no more, Ba Ahmed could afford to revenge himself on all who had before withstood him. He was Grand Vizier in Marrakesh and, after the boy Sultan, he was the chief man in the kingdom. He knew well he could never work with the brothers Jamaï, he—who came of slaves, with negro blood in his veins—and they aristocrats of Fez, so he determined to act at once.

The Jamaïs waited in Fez, expecting the Sultan to come there, but he never came, and the Vizier of Fez was obliged to present himself at the court in Rabat and make his reverence to his Sultan there. He came, surrounded by his followers, and was greeted with great acclamation and respect as they rode into the palace square. Immediately the Sultan received him: he was ushered into the Presence without delay. Abdul Aziz was attended only by Ba Ahmed; when Haj-el-Maati prostrated himself before his lord, a question was put to him by the Sultan, which he did not immediately answer. Without giving him time, Ba Ahmed burst out with charges, accusations, reproaches, loading him with political and private crimes,

calling him, at last, disloyal and a traitor. Before El Maati could recover himself to speak, Ba Ahmed asked the Sultan's permission to arrest him, and the Sultan, saying nothing, nevertheless bowed his head.

It was enough. The proud Moor, who had but ten minutes before ridden through the palace yard an honoured minister of the crown, was now dragged away in chains, his robes stripped from him, his money stolen, and his weapons confiscated.

His brother, the War Minister, was arrested in Fez in his own house; he made no resistance, for he knew it was of no use. Their implacable enemy was in power, it was the will of Allah: he accepted the turn of fortune's wheel!

The two brothers were sent to the state prison in Tetouan, as far away from the court and their friends as possible, they were heavily fettered, chained together and cast into a dungeon in that prison, where they remained for ten long years, and only God knows what those years must have been.

Of all Ba Ahmed's ferocious deeds of vengeance, this was the most terrible; of all the stains of Abdul Aziz' reign, this was the most abominable; but worse was to come!

After ten years' imprisonment, Haj-el-Maati died. He died in the summer, chained, still chained to his brother's body. The Governor of Tetouan dared not unshackle them, for fear he should be accused

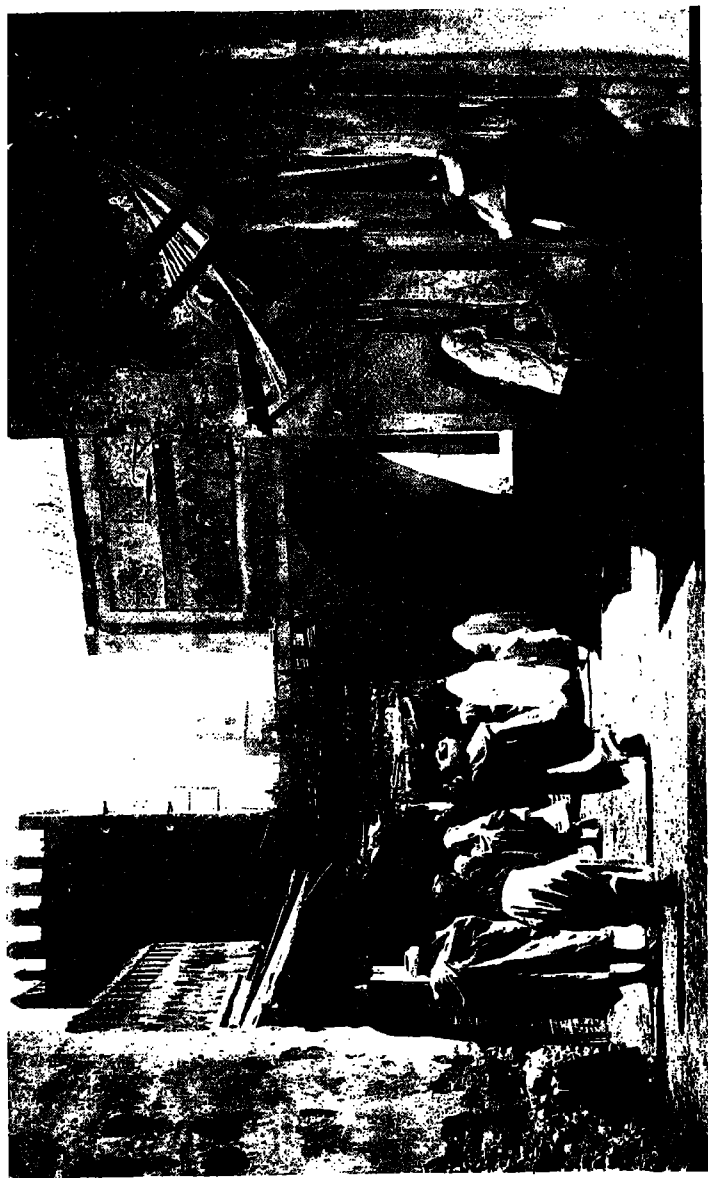
of having allowed an important prisoner to escape. There they remained for eleven days in the great heat, the living man fettered to the rotting corpse, while messages were sent from Tetouan to the court, and back from the court to Tetouan, carrying news of the death, asking for permission to bury the body, giving particulars of how it occurred, assuring the Sultan that the death was a natural one; eleven days in a dark, hot dungeon, chained to a dead body!

Strange to say, Si Mohammed Soreir lived for some years after that ghastly experience. He was released from imprisonment in 1908, and he lingered on, a broken, ruined, tottering old man. In that interesting book, *Morocco That Was*, Mr. W. B. Harris tells of his end: "Two days before his death I saw him for the last time. As I rose to leave he said, 'Listen! When they have washed my body for burial, I want you to see that my chains and fetters are put back upon my limbs. I desire to appear before my God as I spent these last fourteen years of my life, that I may appeal to him for the justice my Sultan refused me, that He, in His great mercy and forgiveness, may open for me the gates of Paradise.'" It is said that a link of his chains was sewn into his shroud.

If one is to enjoy the Palais Jamai, one should not think of the lives of those who lived there, who seem to have been accursed by fate. Ba Ahmed's

arm was far-reaching in his vengeance, and his heavy hand fell not only on the owners but on their wives and children as well. They were persecuted, driven away to starve and perish. When Si Mohammed Soreir was released, he made every possible effort to trace them, but without success. They had all disappeared and no-one knew what became of them.

We went to the Bou Jeloud, to start for the famous drive round the old town outside its walls, which everyone makes, though I, personally, think one gets to know the town better from the inside than from the outside! One seems to leave the town altogether, going out by the Bab Dekakem. Here, by a wide sweep, one drives along the hillside overlooking the valley of Fez, behind the grim-looking state prison and the ruins of the tombs of the Merinide Sultans—which are ruins indeed, for not a roof and hardly a wall is left intact. The road curves down sharply through olive groves, and one seems to be leaving the town behind. A farther downward sweep brings one to the Bab el Guissa, which I think by far the most interesting gate in Fez. It is by no means so beautiful as some of the other gates, but it always has a throng of natives about it, whose evening's amusement is to sit upon the hillside and watch the, to them, incomprehensible visitors to the Palais Jamai, who go there to take tea. In addition to



NATIVE STREET

these idlers there is a constant stream of people coming in from the country with produce. All bundles of firewood and sticks are carefully weighed before entering the town, as no-one may carry a bundle larger or heavier than the regulations permit, in the tortuous streets. Once, twelve rebels—fighting tribesmen—were smuggled into the town in this way, hidden in bundles of wood, and since then the guardians of Fez have been very careful.

From the Bab el Guissa the road turns sharply round, going to the foot of the valley; at its very lowest turn, one sees the river spanned by an old Portuguese bridge, from which a narrow road leads into the open country, away across the plains towards the mountains. One does not cross this bridge, but bears up to the right, through more olive groves, until one reaches the walls again, and from here onwards the road runs along the face of the southern hillside, past the cemetery, to the old southern gate, the gate of El Andalous. The final turn brought us past the cascades of the river as it escapes from the upper town, before it re-enters lower down. From here one sees the palace of El Glaoui rising on the heights of Fez el Bali, and the many other palaces of the rich Fasis, their courts and gardens so intermingled that it is difficult to tell where one ends and another begins. We re-entered by the dusty hole in the wall at which we first arrived—and how differently I regarded it this time!

There are many other both interesting and delightful excursions to be made from Fez. Each day something new was suggested to us: a picnic, a visit to some shrine, a drive to some waterfall or village. Of the last, the most unusual was across miles of plain to the Jewish village of Sefrou. This village, in itself, is not so unique. What is remarkable is the astonishing panorama of mountains from the hill above it, to which we ascended by a never-to-be-forgotten road!

Narrow, uneven and extremely steep, with hair-pin turns all the way up: nothing but the genius of an extraordinary driver could have got the car there in safety. Once up, however, we all agreed that anything was worth such a sight. Mountain ranges rose one above the other all round. A heavy storm covered the northern horizon over the Riff country but our hillside was bathed in sunshine, as were the white peaks of Atlas, stretching away to the south.

Directly below, the little white town lay in a bower of cherry orchards, the sunny plain surrounding it on all sides. This happy valley is one of the most fertile in all the country and the fruit which comes from it is famous.

There were other drives, to gardens, to meadows carpeted with wild flowers, to blossoming orchards, to pavilions and old terraced arbours, used only in the great summer heat; out across the plains, up

into the mountains; everywhere our friends had something beautiful to show us.

When the really hot weather commenced, I wrote to the Compagnie Touache in Oran, and booked my cabin on one of their celebrated steamers to Port Vendres, trying to console myself for leaving Morocco by the thought of that delightful trip across to the Balearic Isles and along the sheltered coast of Spain, where the weather is always warm and balmy. But again and again I wired the Compagnie, postponing my journey from sailing to sailing till they must have thought me mad, but were too courteous to say so!

And so we stayed on and on, far longer than we had meant to do, and the golden days drifted by and still we were lingering, reluctant to go.

But those last days in Fez were tempered by the sadness which always descends upon me when I am about to leave a country I have learned to know well and love.

Useless the efforts of my friends to cheer me. "Insh' Allah—you will return," they said, "and we shall rejoice to see your face again."

"I shall try to learn your language first," I answered, "that I may tell you how I like your city and how happy I feel here."

"It is not necessary to know Arabic to tell us that," I was told, "you understand us; you are in sympathy with our thoughts; that is enough."

On the afternoon when we were really leaving several of our Moorish friends came to bid us God-speed, to wish us a safe journey. They brought fruit and sweet-smelling sprays of leaves and laid them beside us in the car—"that the memory of Fez may be sweet in your thoughts—even these leaves, when dried and withered, will still be fragrant; may the memory of our city, when you are far away, also be pleasant and agreeable to you!"

I always felt that was my real farewell to Morocco.

True, there was Taza and beautiful Tlemcen, but we had lingered too long in Fez to stay there. We seemed to rush through them, to rush, too, through the wild, mountainous country on the borders of Algeria.

Oran, and the fine steamer to Port Vendres, the luxurious train waiting on the quay to carry us quickly to Paris: all seemed a dream to me.

I scarcely noticed it: my spirit was still in the "Citizen city," in its quiet flower-filled courtyards where I had listened to the music and the falling water of the fountain, and where crushed leaves of musk and geranium were pressed into my hands: "to sweeten the hours of the day and make glad the beauty of the night."

FINIS

INDEX

A

Abdul Aziz	25, III, 221, 301
Abu Yussef	81
Act of Algeciras	28
Aissaoua, The	156
Asni	130-133
Azzemour	45, 54

B

Ba Ahmed	110, 309
Bahia, The (Marrakesh)	106
Bled Plain	43
Bouveret, Dr.	75

C

Carpets and rugs	104, 169
Casablanca	20-42
Cedar forests	165
Charms and potions	203, 246
Chella	180

D

Dyers	98, 102
-----------------	---------

E

Education, Progress of	219
El Glaoui	78
El Menebhi	223-228

F

Fez 249-316

H

Harem, Visits to 188, 201
 Holy War, Outbreak of 30

J

Juggling 93

K

Kotoubia, The 81-84

L

Leather workers 98

M

Mamora cork forest 137
 Markets 85-97, 213-217
 Marrakesh 84-133
 Marriage customs 191
 Mat making 184
 Mazagan 46-54
 Medersas (Fez) 271
 Meknes 137-166
 Mogador 67-77
 Mohammed Ben Abdallah 72
 Moorish Architecture 60
 Moulai Hassan 24, III, 309
 Moulai Idriss 160
 Moulai Idriss II 252
 Moulai Mohammed 139
 — State entry into Meknes 141
 Music 298-301

N

Native customs, etc. 62, 234, 240, 292

P

Palais Jamai (Fez)	306-313
Perfume seller	244
Petit Jean	167
" Powder Play "	147

R

Rabat	32, 168-204
— Museum	169

S

Saadien Sultans, Tombs of	123
Safi	57-67
Salé	182
Sefrou	314
Shereefian Empire, Passing of	23
Snake-charming	87
" Southern District "	77
Spinney's garden (Mazagan)	53
Spinney, Robert	53
Story-tellers	39
Students' Festival (Fez)	273

T

Tangiers	205
Tetouan	230-236

V

Volubilis	163
— Sacking of, by Moulay Ismail	154

W

Water-carriers	94
Women, Life of, etc.	64, 187, 192, 289